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THE
OFFICER'S DAUGHTER.

THE
OFFICER'S DAUGHTER;
OR,
A VISIT TO IRELAND
IN 1790.

BY
THE DAUGHTER OF A CAPTAIN IN THE NAVY,
DECEASED.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
OFFICER'S DAUGHTER.

CHAP. I.

THE attentions of Mr. Wayley now commenced again with redoubled assiduity ; hardly a day past but he made some pretence to call in Sackville-street ; and the flippancy of his conversation always wearied Louisa ; it was founded on the fashionable slang of the day, no substance to give it force, no goodness of heart to interest ; and the comparison, she could not help drawing, raised Mr. Morrice still higher in her estimation. Mrs. Barnard also became a frequent visitor in Sackville-

street; always catching at variety, she had been pleased with Louisa. Mr. Barnard encouraged the intimacy, as he perceived the superiority of Louisa to the society his wife was in the habit of selecting; and he joined with her in entreating Mrs. Connolly would suffer her to spend some time with them at Clontarf. Mrs. Connolly said she would spare her for a few days soon; and Mrs. Barnard calling one morning with Miss Dorinda Burke, wished to prevail on her to return to Clontarf with her.

"You must, indeed, my dear," said Mrs. Barnard, "for you mope yourself to death; here have we been seeing all the world in the circular road; and I fully expected to have met you."

These, Louisa said, she had not felt inclined for, the dear little child was so unwell in the hooping-cough; and that, that would likewise prevent her returning with Mrs. Barnard, who

was astonished ; her children were likewise in the hooping-cough, but she had left them to see all the world on the circular road.

Louisa thought all Mrs. Barnard's world should have been found in the bosom of her family ; and yet there was so much bewitching good-nature in the manner of Mrs. Barnard, that although Louisa pitied and lamented her want of thought and feeling, she could not despise her ; for what appeared folly in her, she now saw, was the effect of an improper education.

Mrs. Barnard, good humouredly, asked to see Louisa's little pet, and hoped she would soon bring her to Clontarf, for change of air—"Do come," she said, "dear Miss Courtney, she can play with my children, whilst your pleasing conversation will amuse me, and take from the dulness of our family

parties." Louisa promised she would soon pay her a visit.

Just as they were going, a most elegant little carriage was brought, with a polite note from Mr. Morrice, begging her acceptance of it for her little protégée. She had once said she should like one for her. A wish of Miss Courtney's was a command, a law, to Mr. Morrice, and he immediately ordered one to be built at the first coach-maker's in Dublin. Louisa was delighted when she saw it; but a cloud obscured the smile that had appeared on her lovely features, thinking her aunt might not approve of her accepting it. Mrs. Connolly observed there could not be any possible objection; but Louisa feared she might have thought it imprudent.

The mind of her aunt harboured no narrow prejudices, when she knew the

conduct was correct, and never thought of the inferences that might be drawn by the wicked; her account was always settled with a higher power than the creature or creatures of this world, and although she was an erring mortal, she felt she was a confiding one; and rested her hopes on that Being who alone can judge and pardon. —“This present,” she said, “was given to the child, a helpless infant, thrown on our care; she may some day require all the friends she can make; and shall we, by an overstrained act of delicacy, deprive her of any, and kill the first efforts of kindness by a refusal? Mr. Morrice, from having seen a great deal of her, is almost as much interested in her welfare as we are ourselves, and she shall not lose the comfort of his kind attention.”

Mrs. Barnard thought with Mrs. Connolly; Miss Burke could not

speak from vexation, but she laid plans to ruin the fair fame of her who so innocently excited her jealousy ; and on their leaving Sackville-street, remarked, it was a strange thing Mr. Morrice should be so particularly attentive to the child ; and that it was altogether an odd business : Mrs. Barnard could not agree ; she thought it very natural.

Mrs. Barnard never reflected very deeply on any thing, but she never thought ill-naturedly ; although she had none of the active virtues that would have adorned her situation and station in life, yet she had none of those vices which too often deform it.

Miss Burke saw her insinuation was thrown away on Mrs. Barnard ; who, being pretty and admired, herself, had no cause for envy : she sat silently provoked at what she termed her stupidity ; and determined on throwing

out hints to those whose minds, more resembling her own, would easily understand them. Calling on Lady Fitzpatrick, she told the whole occurrence in a manner sufficiently strong to raise surmises, which are always more dangerous than positive assertions; and going the next night to a rout, she mentioned the extraordinary event of Miss Courtney's having found a child whilst she was in the county of Wicklow!—The look of surprise and unbelief from many, encouraged Miss Burke to proceed; and she confirmed her account with all the exaggerations a malignant mind is capable of giving to an innocent transaction; significant looks were now general in the party, and the shrug and mysterious exclamation of “can it be possible?” “I could not have supposed a countenance so innocent could * * * * *.” “Well! there is no judging from that, it is certain,

and I shall think so no more," said a lady, who was generally considered a good sort of a woman.

"Her youth," whispered a good humoured dowager of quality, "argues it cannot be her own."

That, by the votaries of scandal, was not allowed to be sufficient to clear her : calumny makes every thing subservient to its own purposes ; and, before they dispersed, one half of this delectable group, thought, or wished to think, there was a something very mysterious in what they had heard ; and, until it could be cleared up to whom the child belonged, a great slur must remain on the character of Miss Courtney.

Louisa, unconscious that any part of her conduct could give rise to censure, increased her attentions to the little favourite ; and she almost regretted that going to the masquerade, and the

preparations necessary, should encroach on the time she generally devoted to her. But Miss Maude, all elate at the approaching gay night, was constantly with her to consult about the characters they were to assume; Louisa wished to go as simply attired as possible, and would have preferred appearing as an English country girl; but as Lady Doneraile had chosen the dress of a lady abbess, she wished her to go as a nun, as then she could, with more propriety, be constantly with her. Louisa acquiesced; and her habit was immediately procured.

Miss Maude fixed on the character of Night: a black velvet dress, covered with stars, the crescent composed of all Lady Doneraile's jewels, she thought would be most becoming to her; but what decided her, was the approbation of Mr. Spencer, who said she would look irresistible; and the delightful

idea of dressing as he approved, and being admired by him, can only be properly understood by those, who, like Miss Maude, are in love with one without being certain of its return.

After Louisa left Dublin, Mr. Spencer, who always required some object to admire, being constitutionally susceptible, had paid unremitting attention to Miss Maude. Lady Doneraile remarked and wished to encourage it; he would, she knew, be a desirable match for her niece. Mr. Spencer being a man of good fortune, Miss Maude of good family without any; to marry her well was a great object to her friends; for they knew there is not a being in nature more to be pitied than a girl brought up in fashionable life without money; the luxuries attendant on her situation become necessary to her; and if deprived of them by the death of friends, the world

appears a cheerless blank. In the more humble walk of life, the state of a single woman is not so deplorable; the active duties she is called on to fulfil in domestic concerns takes from the mind that loneliness which makes ancient spinsters, in general, so dissatisfied with the world; and the fretfulness this occasions too often brings a reflection on the whole race. Of this description was Miss Dorinda Burke, whose greatest happiness consisted in depreciating her own sex.

The night, the happy night arrived, as Miss Maude termed it, that was to exhibit a scene to Louisa, the novelty of which, she was sure, would amuse and charm her. Mrs. Connolly went with her to Lady Doneraile, who was to see masks before she went, and this prepared her in some degree for the motley groupe she afterwards met;

but yet, on entering the rotunda she was bewildered and astonished.

Lady Doneraile and party ranged through the different rooms ; and they were soon joined by some of the principal characters. A tall figure, habited as a father-confessor accosted Louisa : “ You have flown early from the world, fair daughter of frailty ! have you been drawn from it by dissappointed hope or ill-requited love ? Come, confess thy cares and troubles to me, and I will give you absolution.” Louisa, from timidity was silent.

“ You take a great deal on yourself,” said a beau, “ for are you aware of the mischief she has done in the world ? many are expiring from the effects of her charms.”

A nun, who stood by, habited like herself, seemed provoked that Louisa was exclusively addressed ; and with

flippancy not at all adapted to her character, said : Concealment, she supposed, suited her best, as she flew to the shades of night for shelter ; every day's experience proved, she continued, that it is not always the fairest form that has the fairest heart.

“ Dost thou judge,” said a Quaker, “ by thine own ? if thou dost, it is an unfair comparison ; thou hast flown from temptations thou couldst not resist, and hast assumed a habit of penitence and forbearance ; but dost thou always practise these ? The spirit, I fear, moves thee to hanker after that world thou professest to disregard ; and which is now about to desert thee.”

“ I wish,” replied the nun, “ that the spirit did not move thee quite so crossly.” “ Out of the sincerity of the heart the mouth speaketh ; for well I know thou art indeed a creature of this world.” Then, turning to Louisa, he said : “ Trust

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in a friend, thou daughter of nature, for thou hast vipers about thee ;” and taking her arm, drew her a little on one side—“ Thy fair fame they try to tarnish, and knowing thy sweet simplicity, would draw unguarded expressions from thy beauteous lips. Pardon, lady, for I speak with the sincerity of true friendship !”

Louisa was astonished ; she had never given any one cause to dislike her. The hints of the Quaker were ambiguous ; but they certainly pointed at some concealed enemy ; might not he be one ; but how could she be assured to the contrary ? She found he had imperceptibly drawn her from the party ; she grew alarmed, and entreated he would convey her back to them ; but still he carried her further into the crowd ; when suddenly letting go her arm, she found herself without a creature she knew near her ; and was

hastening back to find her party, when she was tapped on the shoulder by a fortune-teller, who begged she would cross her hand with a bit of silver. Louisa stopped; for, in the tone of voice of the person who addressed her, there was something particularly soothing. The sybil took her unresisting hand :

“You are good,” she said, “as you are fair; you dispense happiness and shall receive it. The child you found was thrown on your mercy, relying on the goodness of your heart; as that has been done, she cannot be claimed again immediately; she must be protected for two years, when she will be owned, and you will receive the unbounded thanks of her grateful parents for the kindness you have already shewn her; but those parents cannot suffer her, who has fostered and cherished their darling child, to be injured by her

kindness : the busy tongue of scandal has put constructions on your goodness, which wickedness only could do ; you need not entirely discard her, but let her go to Mrs. Brownlow ; that lady will take care of her."

Louisa was about to reply. "Stop!" said the fortune-teller, "attend to what I say, for I demand it of you ; will you promise ? Promise, and you shall have a security that I am no impostor." Louisa, frightened and agitated, promised she would do as directed ; when the mysterious fortune-teller took from her pocket a locket : "Look at this," she said, "and believe I speak truth." Louisa took it, and it was a duplicate of the one worn by the child when she found her—all astonished, she stood fixed to the spot. "Her name," continued the fortune-teller, "is Eliza ; and now I have one more favour to ask ; as you must be convinced I am no impostor,

take off your mask, and let me be certain you are the person I have taken you for ; I have seen you before, but you were unconscious of it."

Louisa, who always acted from the impulse of the moment, did as she was desired ; and shewed to the fortune-teller a face not unknown to her, but more lovely than it had ever appeared ; the roseate hue on her cheeks was vivid from surprise and expectation ; her fine blue eyes were fixed full on the face that agitated her. "Thank you," said the fortune-teller ; and immediately disappeared.

Louisa, all amazement, was about to replace her mask, which she had not succeeded in doing, when a fine figure, in the habit of a minstrel, approached ; he appeared struck by her beauty ; the sleeve of her dress had slipped from her beautiful white arm, which was held up to replace the mask, her face,

form, and attitude, rivetted him to the spot. Louisa stood irresolute which way to go, to find her party.

“ You are alone, fair lady, and seem to be seeking friends ; sweet sound, happy are those who know where to find them ; until you do, suffer an unhappy wanderer to amuse you : ” so saying, he tuned his harp to some soft airs ; the days of minstrelsy had never heard sweeter ; and a crowd was immediately gathered round them. Louisa, dismayed at being alone, wrung her hands in perfect agony ; when the minstrel, seeing her agitation, begged he might be allowed to convey her to her friends ; “ but to whom do you belong ? ” he inquired.

“ To Lady Doneraile’s party,” she answered.

He desired she would describe their dress, for without knowing that, he could not find them : she did so, and

he soon led her to the expecting group. She thanked him for his attention; he gallantly answered, he was no more than rewarded by seeing her happy, and he hoped she would not banish him her presence, but suffer him to linger in her train. She bowed; and gracefully slinging his harp, he retired a few paces behind her.

Never, Louisa thought, had she seen a form so perfect; never had she heard a voice so melodious. She was roused from her admiration and reverie by the priest joining them; he had been looking for her; delighted to find her, he declared he would not part from her again; and begged the lady abbess would invest him with power to guard her.

Lady Doneraile bowed assent; and he drew her arm under his. Miss Maude, who had been separated some time from the party, and flying about

her different friends, joined them soon after Louisa returned.

“My dear Miss Courtney,” said she, “I am surprised to see you here ; I have just heard of a beautiful nun that was seen without a mask, and concluded it was you, but here you are.” “She has been a run-away,” said the priest, “at last, she is secured ; and my power shall not be wanting to retain her.”

A party of weird sisters past them ; and the beau pointed out to her, Lady Fitzpatrick, and Mrs. Stafford ; Lord Mountmorrice as a magician, attended them ; they stopped, and waving his wand, he desired the harper to play ; which he instantly complied with ; and charmed all by the tones he drew from his harp, accompanying it with his voice. He sung of love, and the power of music over the mind ; its close connexion with the tender passion ; its melting softness, which few could

withstand. He seemed particularly to address Louisa.

When he ceased playing, the Quaker said, "Thou art in danger, daughter, sounds like these sink into the heart; yea, verily, thou must fly."

"I think," said Louisa, laughing, "you are too severe, friend; you seem to wish my heart to be hardened." "Not so, I only wish thee to be guarded; thou knowest not who thou mayest meet with here; thou hast powerful attractions." A deep sigh escaped the minstrel, the chords vibrated at the sound; he bent gracefully over his harp, saying: "who could injure one so fair? You need not fear an unhappy outcast."

The weird sisters left them and Lady Doneraile, finding different parties moving to the supper-room, proposed doing the same. The harper still attended, and assisted in procuring them seats;

and standing behind Louisa during supper, gave himself up wholly to her.

The beau was discomposed. The priest's manner was stern and severe ; for he found Louisa too much interested by the graceful stranger to attend to any one else.

At supper many unmasked ; Louisa gladly did so ; but she could not prevail on any of her companions to do the same. The priest anxiously entreated the minstrel to unmask ; on his refusal the priest appeared apparently discomposed, and remained some time absorbed in reflection.

"I pity thee, friend," said the Quaker, "thy priest seems to have forgotten his charge." "I think so too," said Louisa. The soft tones of her voice roused him ; starting, he partly owned the accusation ; but said, "Purity so perfect needs no safeguard, it is a talisman of itself."

"Well, then if that be the case," said the Quaker, "why not leave her?"

"Never, whilst I have life !" replied the priest, "she was committed to my care by a power she will not dispute ; and no one shall take her from me."

This speech convinced Louisa it was Mr. Morrice.

"If you mean," said the minstrel, "to make her confess her sins, let her acknowledge all the mischief she has done this night, to which my heart can bear testimony."

"Ah !" said the priest, "would she but confess, and in that confession bless me with her approbation !" He paused ; a crowd pressing into the room, who had not yet supped, obliged them to move, to make room for those who wanted seats ; and mixing again in the moving throng, the minstrel soon left them.

The interest of the evening seemed now to be lost to Louisa ; and she

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was not sorry when Lady Doneraile's carriage was announced. The Quaker, on taking leave, said, "Fare thee well friend, we shall meet again; my business here to night has been to guard thee from harm; for I am bound to bless thee." "And so are all who have ever known her," said the priest; "my benediction is her own."

CHAP. II.

LOUISA, much perturbed, was delighted to find herself at home; the masquerade, from its novelty, had amused her, but her mind was far from being easy. The adventure of the fortune-teller she longed to impart to her aunt, and she was pleased to find she had sat up for her; the story was told, and the locket compared to the one they had of the child; they were found to be similar, and left no doubt on her mind, but she had been conversing with some one nearly connected with her little favourite; and when she met her in the morning, she regarded her with more than common interest; it occurred to her she might have been speaking to her

mother, at all events, it must have been some one particularly interested about her; but she almost repented of the promise she had made, and wished she had not gone to the masquerade, for then this sacrifice would not have been required, nor would her imagination have been puzzled to find out the characters who had spoken to her in such ambiguous language. The last words of the quaker made her think he was Mr. Morrice; then who could the priest be? and still more did it bewilder her in conjecture, when she thought of the interesting, the elegant minstrel. Her aunt was amused by her artless, yet just remarks, and happy to find, that brilliant as the scene had been, she was not fascinated, but declared it was an amusement she had no wish to partake of again; she felt convinced that true happiness dwells in more retired scenes.

Mrs. Connolly said a mind in a state of serenity might feel that; “ I have” said she with a sigh “ tried both; in tranquil scenes I thought only of the past with regret: I found new objects were wanting to diversify my ideas, I reflected on my own conduct, and could not help disapproving of a great part of it. I came to Dublin to shake off thought, and it answered; I sought in society the consolation which my own bosom denied me, for you must recollect my dear I have not suffered without in some degree deserving my fate: my temper has been impetuous, but trouble has subdued it; and I feel convicted in the history of my ill-fated life: you have known my foibles, and to you I always speak with candour.”

Louisa listened with a melancholy attention to her aunt, now that she knew more of her character; she saw evidently her spirits were forced; and

fancied at times she did not look in health; this idea threw her into a melancholy train of reflections: her disposition was naturally a pensive one; accustomed in early youth to listen to the gentle complaints of her mother, it might be truly said, that “her words were her own, she spoke with a sigh:” and this had given a sombre shade to her feelings, and a touching softness to her character, that particularly endeared her to Mrs. Connolly, who feared the giving up her little favourite might be too great a sacrifice, as she appeared depressed. “If,” said she, “my love, you do not like to part with your little foundling, I do not see there is a necessity for it; the request came from a person in a questionable shape, and although it appeared to be intended to save you from idle aspersions, yet I cannot imagine to what they allude.”

They were here interrupted by Mr.

Tarleton, whose opinion Mrs. Connolly determined on asking, and to abide by it. He thought the business a mysterious one, but certainly the person who had given the locket must be nearly connected with the child, and strongly recommended their sending her to Mrs. Brownlow: he had always condemned their bringing her with them, as he was aware it might give rise to much conjecture, and ill-natured remarks. Mr. Tarleton spoke as a man of the world, Mrs. Connolly had acted as a woman of feeling; the same motives which induced her to bring this little interesting creature with them, had determined her on protecting it until she could discover to whom it belonged; little supposing the tongue of slander or eye of malevolence could misconstrue her conduct into an impropriety, which had no existence but in the minds of the

wicked; the glow of affection warmed her bosom with pleasure unknown to the selfish; and she was surprised when Mr. Tarleton gave her his opinion fully on the subject. From a long intercourse with mankind, his mind, although not illiberal, had acquired a great degree of caution, his profession bringing to his view many corrupt practices, made him more aware of the failings of human nature. The character of a man is much tinged by the line of life he pursues, nor can he fill it properly if that be not the case; the actor cannot perform well that does not feel his part: so on the great stage of human existence the heart must be in every cause, if we wish to acquit ourselves with propriety. Mr. Tarleton's opinion was given with so much good sense and true friendship, that although it did not exactly accord with the tender feelings of Mrs.

Connolly and her neice, yet it decided them on giving up their favourite to Mrs. Brownlow. On reflection, Mrs. Connolly thought it would altogether be for the best, as Mrs. Brownlow had wished it, and it would be the means of securing for her a certain friend; she felt her own health was daily declining, Louisa's remaining with her was precarious, and the little creature might, if not claimed, be thrown on the world.

Louisa remarked to Mr. Tarleton, her aunt's spirits had failed her, and that, without having any appearance of illness, she did not seem well: but it did not strike him so much, he had been ever accustomed to see her return from the cottage at the Dargle depressed; the being there brought forcibly to her mind, past scenes and past sorrows, and it was long e're she recovered her composure after visiting it. The presence of Louisa had, in

some measure, softened the keenness of her recollections, but the malady had taken deep root, and it was evident it had undermined her constitution. Louisa's gentle manners and winning attentions had revived her spirits, calling forth animation which had long laid dormant; this cheering restorative, had acted on her frame like strong sun-shine in a winter's day, whose genial warmth encourages vegetation, and gives to the face of nature the appearance of spring; so it was with Mrs. Connolly: the presence of Louisa had brought all the finer feelings into action, but it was too late; the stock from whence they sprung had been early blighted; the shoots, true to the call of nature, flourished for a time, but the parent tree had been too much shook to support them, and was withering in the exertion. Mrs. Connolly was a woman of great resolution, and

declared to her friends she was in perfect health, though her looks proclaimed the contrary.

Just as they had arranged their plans Mr. Morrice called.

Louisa had not an opportunity before of thanking him for the elegant little carriage he had sent her favourite; regretted that she had been so late in acknowledging the favour, but said she could not have done it before, unless she had brought it into her confessions; she no sooner said this, than she blushed on recollecting his manner, when wishing her to confess.

Thanks from Miss Courtney, he replied, would always give him pleasure; but, in the present instance, he could not think he deserved them; as a being dear to her, must ever be so to him, "for, you know, we have a mutual interest in her." These last words were over-heard by the invidious

Miss Burke, who entered the room with Lady Almeria; the latter lady called to ask how she liked the masquerade, though she thought it must have pleased her, as she understood she had been an object of general admiration. Miss Burke had a sneer on her countenance, which Louisa, unsuspectingly, took for good humour.

Lady Almeria begged to see her protégée, the interesting little creature obeying the summons, ran into the room, and fondly took hold of the hand of Mr. Morrice, who returned her caresses with the utmost kindness. Lady Almeria declared it was a perfect beauty. Miss Burke could not avoid doing justice to her loveliness; but said she was not fond of brats. They paid a long visit, longer than Miss Burke wished for; she was anxious to detail the account of the mutual partiality entertained for the child, and, by her

gross misrepresentations, instilled into the minds of those who were ready to hear her, the idea that this child was certainly Mr. Morrice's and that Louisa, to ingratiate herself with him, had taken it under her protection: this account was credited in the circles where, not over scrupulous of character themselves, they wish to bring every one to their own level.

Louisa and her aunt, as soon as the company left them, set out for Stephen's Green, with their little charge; Louisa felt, if she deferred it longer, she should hardly have resolution to fulfil her promise. They related the extraordinary story of the fortune-teller to Mrs. Brownlow; with delight she undertook the care of the child, saying, "You have, indeed, brought me a treasure, and fondly will I cherish her; I will be to her a mother." The satisfaction with which Mrs. Brownlow

received her, took a great deal from their regret at parting.

Mrs. Connolly had given out cards for a great rout, for the following week; all the world was invited, and all the world meant to be there: Lady Fitzpatrick and the Honourable Mrs. Stafford were asked; they were considered necessary appendages to every elegant party, and an interchange of visits had made it proper Mrs. Connolly should invite them: she did not know the insinuations they had listened to and circulated against Louisa, and the smiles they met her with might have been mistaken for sincerity; they were so by Mrs. Connolly, who felt flattered by the encomiums bestowed on her niece, who, in a plain dress, without ornaments, appeared the goddess of the night, at whose shrine all inferior divinities must bow. All the fashion of Dublin were assembled;

four rooms were open for company, one was entirely appropriated to the dancers, in which Louisa presided: she was more animated than usual, and acquitted herself charmingly, paying every attention to her guests; even Lady Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Stafford could not help allowing there was none of that rusticity which they had at first discovered.

It was the custom, at this period, in Ireland, for the lady of the house to begin the dance, as by that means any preference was avoided, which might give offence. Mr. Wayley, always intrusive, had, in the morning, requested the honour of Louisa's hand for the first two dances; and Mr. Morrice was much mortified, on his joining them in the evening, to find she was engaged. Mr. Morrice seldom danced, though he excelled in that,

as well as in every other accomplishment.

Mrs. Connolly had requested him to come early, to assist her in receiving the gentlemen; and he had pleased himself with the idea of leading off the two first dances with Louisa, not doubting but he should be in time to secure this happiness; he said, rather pettishly, Wayley was, indeed, a happy man, to have so early a preference. Louisa, who saw from his manner he was much hurt, assured him, with all the ingenuousness natural to her, that if she could have formed an idea, he really intended dancing, she would not have engaged herself to any one else; "for you know, Mr. Morrice, I should have given the preference to you." A blush overspread her face as she spoke; she hesitated, but soon recovered her composure, for,

did she not speak to an intimate friend? To a man she had wished was her brother! But Mr. Morrice's vanity construed it differently, he thought she loved him, and was confused in turn, at imposing on a being, so perfect, so innocent: he determined, for that night, to be virtuous, and to fly her dangerous fascinating society.

When the two first dances were over, Louisa expected he would ask her for the second set; but Mr. Morrice continued to avoid her, and seated himself at a card-table for that purpose. Louisa feared she had offended him, and wished she had not engaged herself to Mr. Wayley, apprehensive Mr. Morrice would think she had preferred him, from being younger and gayer in his manner. Ambitious of retaining his good opinion, which she felt gratified in thinking she possessed, she was determined, by every attention

in her power, to convince him, she esteemed him more than any other man in the room. With this idea, strongly on her mind, it influenced her manner, which was not unnoticed by the malignant eye of Miss Burke, who did not fail to make her comments on it. Wayley's assiduities were more disagreeable to her than ever; for they had deprived her of a pleasant conversation with Mr. Morrice, and, perhaps, been the means of her offending him; she was very glad when the two first dances were over, but, as Mr. Morrice did not ask her again, she was indifferent as to whom she danced with; and accepted Lord Mountmorrice, who begged she would walk down the next two dances with him; and, when leading her out, declared he thought dancing the greatest bore in nature.

“Then why, my lord, do you join,” said Louisa; “I beg you will not do

what appears to be so very disagreeable! Pray don't fatigue yourself on my account!"

"'Pon honour I must, it is a necessary evil; fashion, you know, makes slaves of us all."

"I cannot agree with you," said Mr. Morrice, who had been attending; "your lordship seems to be its most obsequious and willing servant."

"No; positively I am not, Morrice, I make many sacrifices."

"But, in the present instance," replied Mr. Morrice, "you do not make any; or, if you do, it is at an altar to which thousands would willingly bring their offerings," (bowing to Louisa) who, not wishing to appear to take this well-turned compliment to herself, said, good humouredly, "Well, my lord, am I to be the means of distressing you; or, will you not allow me to consider the compliment of your having

asked me, sufficient, without your fulfilling it?"

"Oh! no! positively not," replied his lordship; "pray take compassion on me; I shall expire if you do not." So saying, he led her to her place, declaring he considered himself most happy in having the honour of her hand; but, whilst uttering this, his eyes were taking a survey of his own person, which held the first place, in his estimation.

Lady Fitzpatrick watched them narrowly; she had always been accustomed to consider Lord Mountmorrice as her property, and, although she was certain, it was only etiquette, his dancing with Louisa, yet she did not feel perfectly easy: Louisa's loveliness alarmed her; she was likewise the ton, which, she knew, had more influence with Lord Mountmorrice, than even beauty.

When they came to the bottom of the dance, she went up to them
“Your lordship has exerted yourself to-night; I think, I never saw you dance with so much spirit.”

“Your ladyship is pleased to rally; I am not conscious I deviated from my usual custom of walking through the figure; there is no grace in quick motion.”

Louisa wished he had thought otherwise, for she had found him a very tiresome partner; and could not help thinking, it would have been better if he had consulted the time of the tune, more than the graces of his person.

“I should have imagined,” said Lady Fitzpatrick, rather sarcastically, “that Mr. Morrice had been Miss Courtney’s partner, he has followed her so closely.” He had indeed done so; when Lord

Mountmorrice led her away, his eyes were fixed on her in silent admiration; he forgot his previous resolution; and, without being sensible of what he was doing, followed down the dance, when Lady Fitzpatrick remarked it.

“Where is Morrice?” said his lordship, yawning; “I declare it is an age since I saw him; where is he?”

Louisa, astonished, said, “Your lordship has surely a very short memory, for it was only when we began the dance, that Mr. Morrice was speaking to us; have you forgot?”

“Forgot, oh! no! I recollect you wished me to give you up; no doubt that you might dance with him. Well! I will not monopolize; Morrice! do come here, for Miss Courtney has regretted your absence so much, that I am sure it would be punishment to dance another dance with me;

therefore, my good friend, I will be generous and give up my right; you shall dance the next with her."

Mrs. Stafford and Miss Burke had just joined them, and over-heard the concluding part of the speech. Mr. Morrice bowed, and was about to take her hand; Louisa felt confused, but was determined not to be made the sport of a coxcomb; and conveying, by her looks, that dignity, which, when necessary, she could so well command; distantly curtsied to Lord Mountmorrice; thanked him for informing her of his being not only tired of dancing, but of his partner; and, begged to assure him, she was not transferable, and intended to set down the next dance.

Lord Mountmorrice apologized, but it would not do; and he had never before felt himself so much abashed, for her manner was not that of a girl,

whose vanity was hurt, but the mild dignity of a gentlewoman, who, feeling herself offended, knew how to support her own consequence. He had been led on, by significant looks, from his favourite, Lady Fitzpatrick, to make a fool of Louisa; as he knew he should gratify her by raising a general quiz at her expense. Mr. Morrice hoped she would allow him the honour his lordship had so kindly given up to him; but she steadily declined dancing any more that set, and, as soon as she could, joined Miss Maude.

Mr. Wayley, delighted in observing her distant manner to Mr. Morrice; he was in hopes the favourable time had arrived for him, and determined in his own mind, to make her an offer as soon as possible.

Miss Maude was not in her usual spirits. Mr. Spencer was to have made one of the party, but he had received

a letter, informing him his father was dangerously ill, and he had left Dublin, that morning, in the packet: Miss Maude's vivacity fled with him; and she had no pleasure, but in looking forward to the time, when, by themselves, she might unbosom herself to Louisa. The little misunderstanding, that had taken place between Lord Mountmorrice and Miss Courtney, was whispered about the room.

Miss Burke did not fail to insinuate that it was owing to Louisa's great regard for Mr. Morrice, that she had been so much discomposed at his not asking her to dance; and not being able to command herself, she had behaved quite rude to Lord Mountmorrice, whilst Louisa, thought no more of it, and as she met him occasionally, treated him with her usual civility. Her manner, to Mr. Morrice, was certainly reserved, for his had

appeared mysterious to her; 'twas strange, she thought, but she had not time for reflection, for the unbounded attention, she received, occupied her too much.

CHAP. III.

FROM the ball-room they repaired to supper; this repast, after dancing, generally animates; the hilarity of the moment was aided and refined by feminine wit and softness; all was gaiety, tempered by chaste decorum.

Lady Fitzpatrick and the Hon. Mrs. Stafford thought it rather stupid; there wanted the loud laugh, the insidious *double entendre*, and the sharp repartee, to make it, in their opinion, charming; but, happily, all were not of their stamp.

Lord Mountmorrice was, as usual, of their party; and they formed, after supper, with the addition of Miss Burke, a little coterie; and enjoyed their own conversation. The young

people declared they had not enough of dancing.

Mrs. Connolly said they might return to the ball-room ; they all rose most grateful to her, for suffering them to continue their amusement. The card-players would have been equally so, had they been allowed to resume theirs ; but Mrs. Connolly, though she wished hers to be a house for innocent pleasures, would have been sorry had that of gambling been affixed to it ; and being aware there were many who, the longer they played, entered more deeply into it, she proposed the whole party should become spectators of the dancing.

Mr. Morrice seconded her motion, and led the way to the room ; his manner was evidently constrained, and he tried to avoid Louisa ; but an accurate observer could not fail to remark that his eyes and whole attention were

fixed on her face; not caring who he spoke to, if not speaking to her. He entered into conversation with Miss Burke, who exerted all her art of conversation to render herself pleasant to him; it was long since she had been so noticed, and was quite elate: after trying every subject that had formerly interested him without effect, she expatiated on the pleasures of the evening, and the excellent style every thing was conducted in; he assented, it had indeed been very charming.—“Delightful!” said Mr. Morrice, “she dances delightfully:”—his eyes fixed on Louisa, who had just finished the dance; and no longer able to command himself, left Miss Burke to think as she pleased, and joined Louisa.

Miss Burke swelling with spite and vexation, her eyes followed him as he went down the room; he did not immediately address Louisa, who was

conversing with Lady Almeria, but stood listening attentively to every thing she said. Miss Burke, much agitated, could not sit any longer, but joining Mrs. Barnard, walked with her to the place where they were standing.

Mrs. Barnard, with great good humour, inquired for her little protégée ; and hoped she would soon bring her to visit them. Louisa said she would herself make out her long promised visit, but that she had given up the child for some time to Mrs. Brownlow. Mrs. Barnard was happy at all events there was a prospect of seeing her.

“Pray,” said Miss Burke sneeringly, “has Mr. Morrice consented to your parting from this darling? In the care of it he is surely a party concerned ; for,” continued she, “I heard him declare that you were both interested ; and surely, if that be the case, he must

have an equal right in the disposal of this precious charge."

"Mr. Morrice or myself," said Louisa, "can have no right but that which common humanity dictates; thrown mysteriously in my way, I consider myself as most bound to protect her. Mr. Morrice's humanity prompted him to be kind to her; he having seen her in a most helpless state, when first thrown on my care."

"She is certainly a happy child," said Miss Burke.

"I should rather think an unfortunate one," replied Louisa; "deserted by her parents, and left to strangers, is surely not to be termed happiness!"

Miss Burke looked incredulous. Lady Almeria declared it was the most charming adventure she had ever heard of; she compared Louisa to Pharaoh's daughter, only she thought her still more meritorious, for she had borne

the helpless infant home, having no damsel to whom she could give her in charge: her high-flown style amused and gave a good-humoured turn to a conversation which Miss Burke had commenced with so much acrimony.

Mr. Morrice moved away soon after Miss Burke began speaking, and therefore did not hear the pointed sarcasm of her manner. The dancers appeared to flag, and it was agreed they should leave off; indeed many had gone.

Mr. Morrice lingered to the last, and seemed as if he wished to speak to Louisa; but his manner had been so unaccountable, she had no wish to give him the opportunity he seemed to desire.

Louisa, alone with Miss Maude, regretted she had been in such low spirits: when, bursting into tears, she confessed Mr. Spencer's sudden departure had been too much for her. To

Louisa she did not scruple to own how much she felt interested about him; and that the very particular attention he paid her had sunk deep into her heart; but, although his eyes fully declared his feelings, his tongue never confirmed them:—too many men there are of that description, who practise a species of flirtation the most cruel; a man who, by every delicate attention wins the heart of a female, without making any absolute declaration, inflicts a wound which seldom or ever is healed; and yet he is suffered to act with impunity! Louisa was hurt to think Mr. Spencer was this sort of character; appearances were certainly against him; and she thought it the duty of friendship to place his conduct in a proper point of view; and by rousing the pride of Miss Maude, check the tenderness of a passion which, if indulged, might ruin her peace for

ever. Miss Maude, lively in all her sensations, was easily convinced and persuaded that Louisa's advice was dictated by true friendship, promised to do all in her power to forget him ; and she went to rest more composed than she had thought it possible she could have done after parting from Mr. Spencer. Not so Louisa ; her rest was disturbed by thinking of Mr. Morrice's strange conduct, and Miss Burke's insinuation ; harassed and perplexed, she attempted to sleep, but in vain. Mrs. Connolly saw the alteration in her looks ; but imputing it to fatigue, did not notice it.

Wayley, who had been highly gratified by Mr. Morrice's coolness to Louisa, thought this was the time for making her an offer, and determined on embracing the propitious moment. He was convinced Morrice would not renew his attentions, when he heard

they were considered serious ; and he intended to give him this information as soon as possible. Wayley's finances were terribly deranged ; Mrs. Connolly appeared to be as good a life as himself ; and he found he could not take up more money but at an enormous interest. Louisa Courtney was lovely, was captivating ; and Captain Courtney considered rich. Mrs. Connolly too, whose income was very large, would, he thought, assist in supporting them ; and there was no time to be lost in gaining this valuable prize. He wrote her a most pompous offer of marriage ; she was much amused and surprised at the style it was written in, as he appeared almost assured of her acceptance ; she did not hesitate a moment as to the answer she meant to send him ; but taking the letter to her aunt, asked her, with a smile, what she ought to do ?

Mrs. Connolly said, she presumed she had already determined: that in her own mind, there were many things for and against it.

“Can you, my dear madam,” said Louisa, “think there is any thing in favour of my marrying Mr. Wayley?”

“Certainly,” said Mrs. Connolly, “for in the acceptation of the world he would be considered a good match; the property which must come to him at my decease will be very considerable; and if you liked him, I, of course, would give up some portion in my lifetime; for I have more than sufficient.”

“Oh! my dear aunt,” said Louisa, “can you for a moment fancy I have a partiality for Mr. Wayley?”

“Why?” replied Mrs. Connolly, “his person is not bad, his manner and figure are generally thought prepossessing; and I did not know, if your affections were disengaged, but he might have

made an impression ; for a heart unoccupied is ready to receive, as its tenant, the person who pays the most attention."

A deep sigh escaped Louisa ; but it certainly was not caused by Mr. Wayley.—“ Ah ! my dear aunt,” she continued, “ I find you do not yet know me.—Advantages estimated by the world in general, are, by me, unregarded.”

Mrs. Connolly was pleased to hear opinions which so much coincided with her own ; she had spoken in this manner to draw forth the ingenuous sentiments of her heart ; and was pleased to find they were as she could wish. Louisa wrote a positive refusal to Mr. Wayley ; and, to avoid his importunities, said she would pay her visit to the Barnards.

Mrs. Connolly readily came into her plan, saying it was just what she wished ; having some poor pensioners at

Clontarf, she would commission her to visit them. She had the happy art of so pleasingly complying with the wishes of her friends, that conformity to their opinions seemed more as if they had conferred the favour, than that she was the person who did so. Mrs. Connolly took her to Clontarf; she was received with the most heartfelt kindness by Mr. and Mrs. Barnard; who would not hear of Mrs. Connolly fixing any time for her return; but said, it was sufficient to do so when she came again. Mrs. Connolly felt perfectly satisfied in leaving her niece with them, as she knew to the care of Mrs. Barnard, she could safely entrust her.

When the children were admitted to the parlour, they flocked about Louisa, and bestowed on her the most affectionate caresses; her presence seemed to proclaim a holyday. The whole system of the house appeared changed;

Mrs. Barnard found more pleasure in talking to her than fondling the lap-dog; the children were not now neglected; but no one benefited more by the general reformation than Miss Blaggrave, the childrens' governess. The polite attention of Louisa was a balm to her feelings, which had long been wounded by indifference. The situation of a governess is often much to be pitied; when they are in company they too often meet with contempt from characters who, holding a high rank in society themselves, know not how to appreciate merit in those whom fate has placed beneath them. How many amiable young women in this situation suffer from the sneer of haughty ignorance, or the chilling look of superiority; whilst the fashionable mother of the day seldom considers them a fit associate for herself, though they are entrusted with the care of the

morals and manners of her children. This had been the case with Mrs. Barnard; and until Louisa pointed out the superior excellencies of Miss Blgrave, she had never thought it worth while to enter into conversation with her. Mr. Barnard had given her the entire management of his children, for he saw she was capable of fulfilling the charge. Every conversation Mrs. Barnard had with Louisa, every sentiment that came from her lips, strengthened her domestic comforts.

Mr. Barnard beheld with delight the improvement the manners of his wife were likely to undergo; and he cherished the amendment by the tenderest attentions; and more than ever venerated the object who seemed, by her superior perfections, so well calculated to rouse his wife from the selfishness and folly she had fallen into: he hailed virtue as an all-perfect good, that brings

into action the feelings which adorn human nature by its beneficent influence: the father provides for his consort and children, whilst the mother watches with the nicest care over the morals and manners of her offspring: the brother is the noble protector of his sister; whilst she, in her turn, is his companion and friend. Instinct alone would not do this, it proceeds from a higher source; those good affections implanted in us by the hand of a superior Being, and that ray of reason which his mercy bestows! Its qualities, Mr. Barnard trusted, would make an impression on the mind of his wife; the force of example, he well knew, had more weight than precept; and he was pleased to see it already had taken some effect.

Mrs. Barnard now discovered a thousand beauties in her little ones which she had not before noticed; when

Louisa praised them, she did not seem displeased, but agreed with her ; indeed she was ashamed of being inattentive to her own children, when she recollected she had seen Miss Courtney fondly attending to one who had no other claims on her than those of humanity ; she now thought her Eliza as pretty as the little Eliza Louisa cherished ; and she never objected, as before, to the girls joining them in their walks, and partaking of recreations suited to their age.

CHAP. IV.

A wood, near the house, was generally the scene of their amusements: Louisa had taken them there one day, Mrs. Barnard having a book to finish, did not accompany them; the air was rather sharp, and she ran in and out of the trees, absolutely playing hide and seek with the children, when, much to her astonishment, Mr. Wayley joined them: he accosted Louisa as if nothing had happened, told her that Aurora could not cast such resplendent rays as her countenance emitted: seeing her much out of breath, begged he might have the honour of supporting her to the house, and, with an air of assurance, and self-confidence, threw his arm round her waist; she

tried to disengage herself, but found it was perfectly impossible to do so, as she was quite encircled by his arms. At that moment Mr. Morrice made his appearance; she had not seen him since his strange conduct at Mrs. Connolly's ball; and almost crying with vexation, endeavoured to force herself from Mr. Wayley; but it was some minutes before she could make any answer to the salutation of Mr. Morrice, so much was she confused; whilst he, almost petrified, and with emotions most painful, begged pardon for having obtruded, saying, that Mrs. Barnard had told him he would find Miss Courtney in the wood, with the children; could he have suspected her being engaged, he would not have intruded; saying which, he bowed, and instantly left them. Louisa called after him, but in vain, he either did not, or pretended not to hear; this

increased her distress, and she burst into tears.

Mr. Wayley, with a provoking sangfroid, said, "My dear, Miss Courtney, why so distressed? I did not believe you were in so much dread of Morrice.—How has he gained this happy ascendancy over you?—I will ask him, and then study his insinuating powers."

"No powers," said Louisa, "will ever give Mr. Wayley an influence over me; and allow me to assure you, sir, your attentions are as disgusting as they are impertinent."

"Disperse your anger, engaging charmer! Even in a cloud your face is bewitching! Oh! bless me with its sunshine." And, with his usual obtrusive manner, he entered the house.

Louisa retired immediately to dress; and, on going into the dining-room, she was astonished to see Wayley still

there. He addressed her with as much composure, as if he had never offended her; she determined on being very reserved to him, and to account for her conduct afterwards to her friends. Louisa had a natural frankness which made restraint unpleasant; but, in the present instance, it was only justice to practise it.

Mrs. Barnard was surprised she could be so distant to so charming a man as Mr. Wayley, whose fashionable chit-chat was delightful. He entertained her with an account of the masquerade, which Mrs. Barnard had been prevented going to, by indisposition. The priest and quaker's close attention to Louisa was fully detailed. Her meeting with the fortune-teller was unknown to him, or that would have been repeated for her amusement.

Mrs. Barnard lamented she had not been there. Mr. Barnard said he only

regretted the cause of her absence; for he was astonished any one could be pleased with an amusement where so much deception was necessary, to render it pleasant; for his part, he could not see how a character, with common honesty, could take pleasure in appearing what they were not; it encouraged a species of deception in young people, which should not be tolerated; and when his daughters grew up, they should not attend them. It was, he continued, a place of unlicensed pleasure, where every coxcomb (looking at Mr. Wayley) had it in his power to whisper any thing he pleased in the ear of a female.

Mrs. Barnard was distressed, fearing Miss Courtney would be offended at these remarks, as she had been there; but Louisa, who had none of that tenaciousness attendant in little minds, felt gratified that Mr. Barnard's opinion

coincided with her own; and with energetic modesty joined him in condemning them, declaring she had never returned from a public place so little satisfied. Mr. Barnard observed, a mind like Miss Courtney's could not be contaminated by going, (Mr. Wayley smiled) but he was sure she could not be amused.

Mrs. Barnard thought she had never seen Louisa so unamiable, as when joining Mr. Barnard in abusing so bewitching an amusement. Mr. Wayley protested there would be no existing without these charming varieties, and wondered Miss Courtney could have found it irksome, as she was considered the divinity of the place. He then related the circumstance of her taking off her mask, and by so doing, creating a buzz of admiration. Mr. Barnard was much amused at her natural manner of describing her feelings, and the

relief she found from taking it off, as it had, all night, been so troublesome to her; and declared she would not, on any account, endure so much again.

On the ladies going to the drawing-room, "My dear," said "Mrs. Barnard, why did you join Mr. Barnard in abusing a masquerade? It is an amusement, of all others, I am most fond of; and now, when wishing again to go, he will more than ever object: saying, you heard your favourite Miss Courtney's opinion; her, whom you wish to copy."

Louisa thanked her for the compliment, but assured her she had declared her real sentiments: "And now, my dear Mrs. Barnard, did you ever return from one perfectly pleased and satisfied? Has not some ambiguous remarks, from characters unknown, generally soured the pleasure of the

evening, and left you restless and dissatisfied, where you expected to have found pleasure?"

Mrs. Barnard allowed it sometimes might have been the case, but, in general, she said, it was most charming; then flying to her piano, played a lively air. Louisa, pleased with her good humour, would no longer try to controvert opinions, which, perhaps, gave happiness to the possessor; she thought Mrs. Barnard's mind was not sufficiently strong for argument; and although it was evident she always wished to act right, it was as evident she had not always resolution to do so.

The children entering, the room soon became a scene of festivity. Mrs. Barnard had not got into the habit of admitting them; the fine eyes of the little Eliza glistened with pleasure, when her mamma drew

her to her; and untying her frock, said it was not well fitted to her shape, and that she would superintend the making of the next. The affectionate little creature throwing her arms about her mother's neck, said, "Then mamma I will always wear that frock." The words and the action certainly touched the heart of Mrs. Barnard, and it is probable she felt more real pleasure at that moment than ever a masquerade had afforded her, for it was a pleasure without alloy; except, indeed, she might have reflected how long she had deprived herself of the happy sensation arising from the embraces of her child. That some such ideas as these did arise there cannot be a doubt, for she again took her Eliza to her bosom, and said she should have the prettiest frock that could be made in Dublin. The ideas of Mrs. Barnard did not rise beyond offering an article of dress as a reward

to her girl, and Louisa was happy to hear her affection expressed in any way : the attention and understanding of Mr. Barnard, she knew, would give a proper turn to their pursuits, but the tender affection of a mother he could not supply the deficiency of. Louisa had done all in her power to create this interest in her bosom, and hoping she had succeeded, beheld with delight the glow of affection that mantled in the pretty face of Mrs. Barnard as her Eliza stood resting her arm on her shoulder ; and, not to interrupt the reciprocity of affection that seemed newly awakened, she busied herself in amusing George, a fine boy, of three years old, who wished very much to persuade her to mount a little wooden-horse he was playing with.

Mr. Barnard joined them ; he stood some time astonished, contemplating a scene so new, so gratifying to his

feelings. Louisa was delighted Wayley was not with him ; the fact was, he had seen her coolness, and, to prevent his vanity being further wounded by it, took leave, pleading an engagement for the evening in Dublin.

Louisa frankly informed Mr. Barnard how happy she was to find he had lost his companion. “ I am astonished to hear you say so,” he replied, “ as I should not suspect you of coquetting ; but from Wayley’s conversation with me I should imagine him a favoured lover ; he says you are the idol of his affection ; and I can tell you he does not at all despair of success, and flatters himself he has the sanction of your aunt.”

Louisa thought it now necessary to explain ; she told him how much he had annoyed her in the morning. Mr. Barnard regretted he had not known this before, as he certainly would not

have asked him to stay. "Your manner to day," he said, laughing, "must have been different, or it had different effects:—you complained of not having been able to get rid of one lover, whilst I met another flying from you. Pray what did you do to Mr. Morrice in the wood? He appeared in perfect distress; I did all in my power to prevail on him to come in; but he would not; saying, his errand was merely to deliver a message to you from your aunt."

Louisa was astonished: Mr. Morrice had delivered no message, indeed had hardly spoken to her; and she felt more than ever disgusted at the impertinence which had prevented him, and been the means of driving him away.

Mrs. Barnard was surprised to find Mr. Wayley had behaved so improperly, as she thought him too charming a man ever to act wrong; Louisa had never before felt so perturbed. Mr.

Morrice, she was certain, would consider Mr. Wayley as a favoured lover, and it would be some days before she could undeceive him; his manner too was strange, was unaccountable; why not have delivered a message from her aunt? if, indeed, he had brought her one. — Perhaps it might have been something of consequence, something she ought to know; she would send to her the next day; she would get her to explain to Mr. Morrice, and then no time would be lost in regaining his good opinion. A mind that has been agitated, from whatever source it arises, revolves every expedient that can contribute to its composure, and when it once makes a covenant with itself, the difficulty seems half surmounted, though the evil is not yet subdued—so it was with Louisa, who, after having settled her plan, was herself again, and met her friends in the morning with her usual placid countenance.

They had scarcely finished breakfast when Mrs. Connolly's carriage drove to the door. Louisa, alarmed, was apprehensive something had happened, but her aunt soon explained, by asking if Mr. Morrice had not delivered a message that she had sent by him, to say she should be with them early, as she had an idea of going to Houth, to inquire into the truth of a most melancholy tale that had been told her by a very interesting little girl, who had called at her house the day before for charity: she said she should depute Louisa to inquire into the particulars, as she wished to call on Lady Southby.

Louisa always happy at being the means of dispensing charities, gladly accepted the office. It was settled that, as the morning was fine, she should go on the jaunting-car, and she requested Miss Blgrave and the children might accompany her. The

children were delighted, and throwing their arms round her neck, exclaimed, "We will always love you, dear Miss Courtney, for making us so happy." The horse, which was a high-spirited coach-horse of Mr. Barnard's, took them rapidly along. They soon found out the cabin of Patrick Sullivan.

Patrick Sullivan had been a fisherman, and for some years had supported his family in credit; many a tempest had his little bark braved, and returned with the produce of his labours to his peaceful home, the wife of his bosom spreading with care her humble repast to cheer him; her smile never failing to make his board a festive one. She was not of the common class; he had married her when mate of a Bristol trader; her mother, who kept a respectable lodging-house, had disapproved of the match. Sullivan immediately brought her to Houth, and sup-

ported her in comfort by the efforts of his never-failing industry, affection lightening every care: but one direful storm destroyed all their happiness.— He had saved money enough to purchase a new boat, and thought himself so secure in it, that he went out in all weathers; but the boat was not proof against the violence of the tempest of this dreadful night, after tossing about a great while, she filled with water. Sullivan and his son, a fine boy, went to the bottom! a large boat, at a distance saw their fate, but could not help them. The owner of it too sadly confirmed the account of this disaster to his wretched wife; who had been listening all night, in fearful apprehensions, to the roaring surge that beat against her window; the news was too much for her senses, and she, for a time, lost in wild oblivion the knowledge of her cares; her family was

neglected, and her daughter, a girl of seven years old, had nothing left but to beg a subsistence for her mother.

The charity of Mrs. Connolly was well known, and going first to the house of that lady, she received an immediate relief, with a promise, that if her tale proved to be true, she should be assisted. Mrs. Connolly had given her niece a sketch of the circumstance; Louisa left Miss Blagrove with the children, and, like the Goddess of Charity, entered the cabin.

CHAP. V.

IN the middle of the room sat a woman, with her arms folded in silent despair—her eyes fixed on a paper she had formed into something like a boat; she did not appear much turned of thirty; her features were good and interesting; their expression was now lost in wild abstraction!

Louisa endeavoured to take her hand, but the object before her sunk in sullen sadness, refused; pensive she sat, every lineament of her countenance expressing deep anguish: but there was nothing to alarm.

The feelings of Louisa were affected even to tears, and they flowed plentifully. As she stooped down to endeavour to make the poor maniac speak

she seemed roused by the action, and putting her hand on her face, "You are wet," she said, "so was my dear Sullivan; but I have dried his shirt in my bosom;"—So saying, she took out one, and showing it to Louisa, said,—“ See, it will be ready to put on when he comes home, for he is very wet;”—then replacing it, gave a piercing scream, and resumed her former attitude.

Louisa could not support it longer, but going out of the house, gave sufficient to the girl to preserve them from want until they heard from them again. She joined Miss Blagrove, and described the scene she had just left; and on saying she would like to see the poor creature, Louisa offered to take charge of the children whilst Miss Blagrove went to the cabin. She got on the car, and desired the coachman to drive them by the water's side till Miss Bla-

grave returned. The waves were dashing in beautifully, and the children were in high delight; they saw a boat coming very near the shore, and hoped it would reach it whilst they were there.

In the mean time Miss Blagrove entered the cabin; she was much struck on seeing this interesting object, who appeared even more so than Louisa had represented her. Miss Blagrove stood some time endeavouring to sooth her; and on returning to where she left the party, was surprised to find they were not there, but seeing a crowd at a little distance on the beach, she hastened to it; and what was her surprise and alarm when she saw Miss Courtney in the arms of a strange gentleman, and a boatman, followed by the children, who told her that the horse had been frightened, and had almost run into the sea with

them, and had kicked their dear pretty Louisa.

The gentleman, who appeared to Miss Blaggrave to be a man of some consequence, said, on the boat coming to the shore, they drove up rather fast, and that the horse was frightened by the dashing of the oars and the rushing of the waves, that he started, and would have carried the whole party into the sea, but for his jumping out in the moment and catching the animal. The children's crying, and a sudden check, occasioned the spirited creature to kick, by which means, he threw the driver from his seat, and the whole party to the ground; he feared the lady had received an injury, as she had fallen very near the horse when he was kicking.

Louisa's beautiful auburn tresses had fallen on her shoulders, and the stranger, in contemplating her, thought

he had arrived at the land of beauty ; he advised she should be immediately taken home, as bleeding might be necessary ; but what was Miss Blgrave's distress when she found the coachman was too much hurt to drive them ! She stood some moments considering what she should do. The stranger guessing her embarrassment, offered his servant ; which Miss Blgrave had no alternative but to accept.

Whilst the car was getting ready, the stranger procured a little water for Louisa, which seemed to revive her, and he assisted Miss Blgrave in placing her on the car, desiring she would direct his man where to drive, and placing himself on the other side, took charge of the children, who soon went to sleep from the fright, and fatigue of crying.

The stranger observed a solemn silence ; Miss Blgrave was sufficiently

occupied in attending to Louisa, who languid could not support herself without assistance, they were obliged to go slowly on, and were some time before they reached Clontarf: the stranger supporting the children in his arms to prevent their falling off.

The sudden stopping of the car awoke them, and clapping their little hands with delight, they said, "There is my papa's house." "What is the name of your papa?" asked the stranger. "Why he is Mr. Barnard," answered the eldest, "dont you know him?" The rewas no time for reply, the servant had rung the bell, and it was necessary for Louisa to be supported into the house. Miss Blagrove immediately hastened to Mrs. Connolly, telling her in a few words, they had met with a slight accident, that Louisa was not much hurt, as she had been preserved by a stranger.

Mrs. Connolly could hear no more but going to receive her, what was her astonishment to meet her supported in the arms of her uncle.

Amazement fixed her to the spot, and exertion was lost in admiration of that Being who brings all his wise purposes to pass:—The bitter enemy of the mother now appeared to have been the preserver of the child, and as such Mrs. Connolly rushed into the arms of her brother. All explanation was deferred until Louisa was taken care of; she had fainted when taken out of the car, Mrs. Barnard abundantly good humoured exerted her powers to contribute to her restoration; she was put to bed and a medical man immediately sent for.

Miss Blagrove gave an account of the accident, but Mrs. Connolly had still to learn, what chance had brought Mr. Courtney to that spot. After

Louisa was bled, the surgeon declared there was no danger as she was more alarmed than hurt ; that the fall from the car had bruised her, but he hoped on the following day she would hardly be sensible of any injury.

The party met at dinner, leaving Miss Blagrove to take care of Louisa : Mrs. Connolly would not have left her, had she not wished to satisfy her curiosity, as to her brother's appearing so suddenly amongst them.

Mr. Barnard had all the polite ease so inherent in the character of an Irishman ; he welcomed Mr. Courtney to his house, and from the natural assimilation of manners in two well-bred men, they already appeared as old acquaintances. Mr. Courtney explained to his sister how he came to meet with his niece ; the wind was contrary, and the Captain of the packet said he feared they could not reach Dublin till the

following day; sea-sick and tired, he got impatient, and told the captain he must land him wherever he could, the nearest place was Houth, but he dissuaded him from landing there, as he could not get any proper conveyance to Dublin. Mr. Courtney did not mind that; said he would rather walk than stay any longer on board; from the tacking and sailing about, his sickness had become intolerable. The packet being full, he was not well accommodated, and he was determined to risk any thing rather than remain another night on board, "And on reaching the shore," continued Mr. Courtney, "I met your niece."

There was a loftiness and peculiarity in his manner of saying this, that Mrs. Connolly did not like, but she suppressed her displeasure, and as graciously as she could command herself to do, thanked him for the part he had

taken in the preservation of Louisa, saying, she trusted her gratitude would ever be added to the natural affection, it was her duty to bear him.

“ You would” said Mr. Barnard, “ have been considered a fortunate man, sir, to have saved so lovely a woman from further mischief were she not related to you, but now your feelings must be truly enviable.”

Mr. Courtney bowed, but it was not the bow of heartfelt kindness for which the tongue had no utterance ; it was the bow of self-approbation and pride ; for the warm glow of affection seldom animated the bosom of Mr. Courtney : it is true on meeting his sister he had felt a sensation unknown before ; and, when he found the young woman he had been supporting was the daughter of those Parents he so long neglected, the blush that should have tinged his cheek recoiled back

to his heart, and produced a kind of sickening sensation there; and instead of joining in the praises which were lavishly bestowed by Mr. and Mrs. Barnard on Louisa, he turned the conversation, by apologizing for being thus thrown on their hospitality, and begged to know if there was an inn near, that he might no longer intrude.

Mr. Barnard would not hear of his leaving them that day; an Irishman never feels hospitality a tax; it is the spontaneous effusion of his soul, a part of his existence. So pleasantly did Mr. Barnard entreat him to stay, that he soon lost the wish of leaving them.

Mrs. Connolly hoped they should all be able to return to Dublin the next day; at all events, she would accompany him there, and return again for Louisa. On going to her in the evening she found her much better; she spoke to her aunt of her deliverer,

wished to see and thank him. Mrs. Connolly feared telling her it was her uncle, as it might in her present weak state affect her too much; and Mrs. Barnard agreed in the propriety of keeping it from her until she was stronger, as it would be better for her at first, to suppose it was a stranger she had been obliged to; and on their meeting at breakfast, Mrs. Connolly mentioned this to her brother, who said, he would do any thing to conform to the wishes of his sister and her friends, but hoped he should not at any time be considered as a bug-bear to his niece.

Mrs. Connolly saw that he was not pleased, but this she did not mind, it was preferable to running any risk that might injure the health of her beloved Louisa. She informed her the gentleman had promised to call on them, and she would then have an opportunity of

thanking him. This satisfied her for the present ; she was well enough to give her aunt a full account of the accident, how providentially the stranger had arrived to save her life ; for that the horse was kicking so violently she must have been killed but for his interposition.

Mr. Courtney was anxious to get to Dublin to inquire about the packet, his luggage, &c. and as her niece was so much better, Mrs. Connolly had no hesitation in accompanying him, being perfectly easy at leaving Louisa under the care of the Barnards ; and by that means defer the intelligence of her uncle's arrival until she was better able to bear the surprise ; telling Louisa she should fetch her in a day or two, as she had some arrangements to make previous to her brother's arrival, who she now expected every day ; not having heard from him lately, it was pro-

bable he might have set out. This, she thought, would in some degree prepare her for seeing him on her return.

Mr. Courtney was profuse in his acknowledgments to Mr. Barnard on parting, and hoped at some future period to have it in his power to return his polite attention. When they reached Sackville-street Mr. Courtney was much pleased with his sister's house and situation; he might, indeed, have felt ashamed that he had not seen it before, and that he had suffered his only sister to remain an alien from her own family; receiving from the friendship of strangers that kindness and consolation he might have bestowed. Her charming manner of welcoming him to her house gave birth to some contrition in his breast; but tenderness with Mr. Courtney was always a secondary consideration, and he drove away the disagreeable intruder.

Mr. Courtney sent his servant to inquire about the packet which had just cast anchor; after waiting some little time, he got his master's luggage. Mr. Courtney rejoiced he had not remained the whole time on board. Mrs. Connolly saw, from this manner of expressing himself, that the same irritability of temper, which had often been a source of unhappiness to his family and friends, still existed unsubdued by trouble. Unused to conform to the opinion of others, living a solitary life, his particularities had all gained ground; but she was resolved, by a strict forbearance on her part, to avoid any altercation, and determined on making his visit as pleasant as the nature of her situation would admit.

She apprized Mr. Tarleton of the arrival of her brother, and begged he would dine with them. This Mr. Courtney had never been a favourite of Mr. Tarleton's, he felt happy he

had at last seen his error, and seemed willing to atone for it by visiting his sister.

Mr. Courtney recognized him as an old acquaintance; and in talking of the past they insensibly got pleased with each other.—There is a satisfaction in recurring to past scenes which softens the pain of recollection, the pleasureable part only is remembered; and we like those characters who assist in bringing to our mind days and hours that are fled for ever. Even Mr. Courtney was not insensible of this gratification, which made him thoroughly enjoy the conversation of Mr. Tarleton.

Mr. Morrice passing by the house, and seeing lights, concluded some part of the family were at home, and on being informed Mrs. Connolly was, he went in; he was much surprised and hurt to hear of Louisa's accident. Mrs.

Connolly introduced him to her brother; he remained as long as he could with them; and regretted his being engaged: on his leaving them Mr. Courtney expressed his approbation of him. Mr. Morrice had seen so much of the world he could adapt his manner to all characters; and he lost nothing in the estimation of Mr. Courtney when he understood, from his sister, he was brother to the Earl of Rossmore. Mr. Courtney had a large stock of family pride, he thought to be highly connected was one of the first advantages attendant on this sublunary state; his great enmity against his brother George had arisen from his having refused to marry a sister of a neighbouring peer, who was much attached to him. His own lofty ideas had kept him single, he aspired to a title, but had never been fortunate enough to attach one. Speaking of

Louisa in the course of the evening, he told Mr. Tarleton she had a good appearance, and trusted she would make some great connexion; for if she dishonoured her family by a low one, she should find him as inexorable as he had been to her father.

Mr. Tarleton said he was convinced Mr. Courtney would never have occasion to blush for the conduct of his niece, and spoke in the most favourable terms of her numerous perfections. Any mind but one like Mr. Courtney's must have been gratified by the encomiums he bestowed; he had determined not to love her unless she fully deserved his affection; and she could only do so by aggrandizing his pride.

From the moment Mr. Morrice heard of Louisa's illness he thought only of her, and waited impatiently for the morning, that he might go to Clontarf; which he did immediately after

breakfast, and was truly delighted to find her below stairs; she was much gratified by his earnest and friendly solicitude for her health; his attention was always pleasing to her, for it was not indiscriminately lavished. Her spirits were revived; they had just heard a good account of the coachman, and the poor fisherman's widow, for whom they had procured a nurse; and there was every hope, that by care and attention she might recover her senses; so this sad event appeared to have a much better termination than was at first expected.

Louisa had never looked more interesting, the languor of her countenance rather added to, than diminished, her general beauty, but when she spoke of the escape she had, by the assistance of a stranger, her animation almost overpowered her; she feelingly told the tale of the poor maniac, and Mr. Mor-

rice could have listened to her for ever. He carried a message from Mrs. Connolly, saying, she should be with her to take her to Dublin in the morning.

This intelligence threw a gloom over the whole party, who regretted the loss of their fair inmate from various causes: Mr. Barnard feared his wife might relapse into her former indifference for her children; Miss Blgrave regretted her as a soothing angel that had, by her benignity, brightened her path; the children, from her playfulness of manner with them, seemed to lose a companion; and Mrs. Barnard had never before felt so much real affection for any female; and the remaining part of the day was passed in gloom, from anticipation of the evil they were to sustain on the morrow. Every expression of gratitude flowed from the lips of Louisa for their kind attentions; she was much affected when she left

them, Miss Blagrove sobbed, the children hung round her in affectionate embraces. She got into the carriage quite softened by her emotions, and gave way, for a short time, to the luxury of sorrow; not being of that sort which was tinctured by affliction, there was an inward satisfaction in indulging it. Mrs. Connolly did not interrupt her, she had known the energetic feelings of youth, and liberally made allowances for them.

CHAP. VI.

CONTRARY to Mrs. Connolly's wishes, Mr. Courtney, on their arrival, met them at the door. "How kind," said Louisa to her aunt, "your giving me this agreeable surprise! A thousand thanks, my dear sir, for meeting us here; how can I repay your kindness? Surely, after this, you may demand of me what you please, and I must obey."

"Well," replied Mr. Courtney, leading her in, "remember this: at some future time I may claim your promise!"

"And most willingly will I fulfil it," said Louisa.

Ah! thought Mrs. Connolly, little does she imagine to whom she is promising this perfect submission; no lon-

ger shall she remain in error! She wished she had told her before, but it could not be avoided now. Taking her hand, "Allow me, my dear, to present you to one you are indeed bound to respect; for in your preserver behold your uncle!

Louisa started, and impulsively shrunk back; but instantly recollecting herself, fell at his feet, and taking both his hands, burst into tears. As soon as she could speak she exclaimed, "What is all this mystery? Am I indeed, sir, thus doubly called on to respect and love you? My gratitude, I trust, will be as lasting as my life!" A violent flood of tears was some relief to her feelings.

Mr. Courtney contemplated the interesting figure before him; he saw in her lovely face the softened features of his brother; and with all his stoical indifference it was too much. Raising

her from the ground, he pressed her affectionately to his bosom; he would not trust his voice, for he knew it would betray him; and he wished the feelings of the present moment as much confined to his own breast as possible. Unaccustomed to the sensation he felt, he did all in his power to check it, but it would not do; Nature, all powerful Nature, had the mastery; and no sophisticated reasoning could drive it away.

Mrs. Connolly beheld this scene with delight; and explained to Louisa, in a few words, how her uncle had become her preserver. They had just recovered their composure, when Lady Almeria and Mr. Morrice, who were to dine with them, entered.

Lady Almeria was delighted to see Louisa safe, and congratulated her on her good looks after all that had happened; said she was the most provoking crea-

ture in the world, for more charming romantic adventures occurred to her than any one else—"Now what could be more so than your fall from the car?" The whole party laughing, said they could not agree with her in her ideas of pleasure; Mrs. Connolly had no doubt but Louisa would rather have been excused the delight of that event.

Lady Almeria insisted on the contrary, "For," said she, "has she not called forth the tender feelings of her friends? Why! there is my sober, steady, woman-hating brother rose an hour earlier than usual to go to Clontarf, to inquire for her; can you deny the charge?"

Mr. Morrice bowing, replied, he should be sorry to deny what was so complimentary to his taste and discernment; for who, knowing Miss Courtney, but must feel an interest in her. That his niece should be so peculiarly

noticed by a man of Mr. Morrice's consequence, raised her in Mr. Courtney's estimation, and he exerted all his powers of pleasing. He had been walking about in the morning, and was much gratified with the appearance of the city; he had not time to examine the interior of any of the public buildings, but admired their elegant uniformity; and thought, although Dublin was not equal in magnitude to London, yet, in many respects, it surpassed it. Every man likes to have his nation spoken well of; and, notwithstanding Mr. Morrice had mixed enough with the world to do away national prejudices, yet sufficient remained to make him love his country, and he thought Mr. Courtney very agreeable when conversing on this subject; he told him how much pleasure he should have in showing him every thing worth seeing in and about Dub-

lin; and hoped, before he returned to England, he would visit Castle Rossmore, in the county of Meath; though not far in the interior, he could see and judge of the manners of the Irish peasantry.

Lady Doneraile and Miss Maude joined them in the evening. Mr. Courtney seemed determined on being pleased, but certainly, in the society of well-bred females, he felt himself in a different element to what he had been accustomed to. When at home, he resided constantly in the country, indulging in the same habits and pursuits he had been used to from his childhood, and this self-willedness generally encourages a churlishness of manner; he had been well educated, but yet he wanted the polish female society alone can give. When in London, attending the duties of Parliament, he generally staid at some hotel, mixing very little

with the world ; always delighted to return to his pursuits in the country ; and those pursuits were generally selfish, unless when his fine pack of hounds afforded amusement to the neighbouring gentry ; therefore, Mr. Courtney, seated in the drawing-room of Mrs. Connolly, could not feel altogether at home ; there is a sort of knack in elegant conversation, which is not easily attained but by associating with the refined, or rather the fashionable part of society. It is certainly more difficult for a man to attain this agreeable trifling than a woman ; there are times when a thousand agreeable nothings make up our pleasures ; and why should they not ? It is allowed that we derive a great share of our happiness from “ the small sweet courtesies of life ;” these, Mr. Courtney unfortunately was unacquainted with. His sister saw his embarrassment ; and she likewise re-

marked that he kept a scrutinizing eye on Louisa; who, unconscious, conversed with her usual freedom with Mr. Morrice.

Mr. Wayley called in by chance; Louisa was vexed she had not been able to give her aunt an account of his conduct to her at Clontarf, for she was convinced had she known it, he would not have been allowed to come again to the house.

Mr. Morrice when he entered, resigned his place by her side, he had forgot for a short time that when he last saw her, Wayley appeared as the accepted lover; in the pleasure of her society every idea was lost in the contemplation of her loveliness; the recollection was painfully revived by Wayley's appearance, who with his usual assurance accosted Louisa as if he had never offended; she was evidently cool to him, but this Mr. Morrice thought

was only *finesse*, and endeavoured in vain to hide his chagrin.

Mr. Courtney was much discomposed at the impertinent intrusion of this young man; for he had determined on Louisa's liking Mr. Morrice. Mrs. Connolly having told him Lord Rossmore was an infirm man, and never would marry, already he fancied himself uncle to an earl! Nor did the disparity of years ever strike him as an objection to his niece's marrying Mr. Morrice: indeed his person was so good that it prevented its being so very apparent.

Mr. Wayley knowing Mr. Courtney was an English country gentleman, thought he must treat him with jocose familiarity, which Mr. Courtney was not at all inclined to bear; this increased his disgust of Wayley who wished to ingratiate himself, but took the wrong method of doing so; could he have known, that pride and self-im-

portance, were the leading traits in the character of Mr. Courtney, he would much better have succeeded by attending to and praising every thing he said : there was a sternness and degree of hauteur in his manner which Wayley found he could not quiz to his face. Wearied by his solemnity and Louisa's distance, he did not stay long, but pleading an engagement moved off to Lady Fitzpatrick, where he found a few of her choice friends collected, to whom he gave an account of Mr. Courtney so little favourable, that Mrs. Stafford who was there, declared he must be an English brute, and regretted so many of them were imported to Ireland.

Lady Fitzpatrick said, much as she admired Miss Courtney, she would not think of calling on her again whilst that horrid fellow was there ; “ For, from your account, Henry, I am sure I should scream when I saw him ; the

aunt and niece may be tolerated in society, though I still think them quizzes, they are so intolerably sentimental." Mr. Wayley said that might be, but Louisa was "All that painters could express or youthful poets fancy when they love."

"You are always high-flown, Wayley," said Mrs. Stafford, "let an English woman be as handsome as it is possible; she is so quiet, so tame, it takes from her charms."

"I don't know" replied Lord Mountmorrice affectedly "whether we should find fault with that, as we suffer keenly from having our hearts stolen by our more animated females, who I really think should be punished for their petty larcenies."

"Your lordship had better make them capital offences as you have been so much injured," said Mrs. Stafford.

"Pray," replied Lady Fitzpatrick

“do they still keep that little urchin they made such a fuss about?”

“What, have you not heard,” said Miss Burke, with a sneer, “that they have sent her to Mrs. Brownlow, as a blind? It is a queer story altogether,” nodding her head significantly at Lady Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Wayley had often heard Miss Burke's hints respecting Louisa, and they had certainly made some impression; he began to think she was not all perfection, though it was necessary to his views to marry her if he could: her beauty still captivated him, and it was immaterial to Wayley, if she was not quite so immaculate as he had at first supposed. Emboldened by these ideas he had treated her with a familiarity at Clontarf, which had so much offended and surprised her, as he had never till that time deviated from the most profound respect.

Miss Burke was astonished she had not heard of Mr. Courtney's arrival: it was indeed strange, as she generally knew every thing that was passing; her mind had no resources, and she spent her time in prying into the business of others. She had disgusted Lady Almeria, by her conduct respecting Louisa, for that Lady admired Miss Courtney, not only for the charms of her person, but the many admirable qualities she possessed, and not all Miss Burke's cringing and fawning, could reinstate her in her good graces. Thus thrown out from any chance of seeing Mr. Morrice but by accident, she was more than ever violent against the innocent cause of her mortification, and hearing from Mr. Wayley, that he was a great deal in Sackville-street, now Mr. Courtney was there, she determined on calling the next morning.

Miss Maude, when Wayley left them,

was much amused ; she saw very evidently that he had wished to ingratiate himself into the favour of Mr. Courtney, but could not succeed : “ That is an impertinent young man “ said Mr. Courtney when he went, “ and I much wonder, Mrs. Connolly you admit him ; ” he really spoke to me as if I had been an English farmer ; he should be taught there is a similarity in the pursuits of gentlemen in every country ; had it not been your house madam, I should have had great pleasure in ordering the servant to shew him the door.”

Mrs. Connolly and Lady Doneraile both thought Wayley did not mean any harm ; that he had a great stock of good temper, which made him generally acceptable in society ; in short, he was quite a necessary appendage at every fashionable party in Dublin.

There are frequently those characters

to be met with in life that are popular without any one being able to account for their being so : this was precisely the case with Mr. Wayley ; no one could point out any particular agreeable qualifications, yet a party was never formed but it was agreed he must be asked. Lady Doneraile and Mrs. Connolly endeavoured to make Mr. Courtney understand this ; but he thought nothing but gaining a seat in Parliament should induce a person to ask another to their house they did not like.

“ Every one” said Mr. Morrice “ seems to be giving their opinion of Mr. Wayley, whilst the person who is most competent to speak of his character, is silent.” (looking at Louisa.)

“ I am silent” she answered “ because I have so little to urge in his favour.”

“ Do my ears deceive me?” said

Mr. Morrice, "or can Miss Courtney deceive?"

"Neither," replied Louisa, "for be assured, I speak my real sentiments: Mr. Wayley is perfectly disagreeable to me."

"I am all astonishment" answered Mr. Morrice. "for I supposed Wayley the happiest of men. It is generally believed" he continued "that you are to be married to him."

"But could you" said Louisa "even for a moment think so?"

"And why should I not?" returned Mr. Morrice. "Oh! impossible!" replied Louisa, "in marriage there should be a similarity of ideas; a husband should possess *all* your esteem, and can Mr. Wayley ever inspire that? There should be no draw-back, no mental reservation." She blushed in having so freely given her opinion.

"Go on" said Mr. Morrice "thou

charming moralist, and let me improve by thy artless, yet well-stored mind." Louisa not attending to this compliment said "Would you marry, Mr. Morrice, without this proper association of ideas?"

"Would I marry!" he exclaimed, "Oh, Louisa! Miss Courtney, I mean, but I beg your pardon, pray proceed."

"Well, then, would you marry a woman you did not exclusively prefer?"

Mr. Morrice paused; this was a subject most trying to his feelings; his eyes were fixed on the beautiful expressive face of the speaker, but his thoughts appeared to wander; and happily for him, Mrs. Connolly interrupted the conversation, by asking what Wayley had done to offend Louisa? She promised her an explanation in the morning; and Mr. Morrice felt assured he had erred in supposing she was in

love with Wayley : this idea certainly made him look forward with greater pleasure to their visiting Rossmore Castle.

Lady Doneraile apologized for her lord's not calling on Mr. Courtney, being prevented by the gout; but he sent a most polite invitation by her; and it was so graciously delivered, it could not fail to please. Attention did every thing with Mr. Courtney; and where is there a mind proof against it? The pleasing cordiality of the Irish is particularly striking to strangers; they no-where shine so much as at home. An Irishman in England is a being of whom every one is doubtful; the numbers of fortune hunters, gamblers, and indeed the refuse of the nation, who flock to the different watering places, too often bring a slur on the whole.

Mr. Courtney was agreeably sur-

prised to find them so different to what they are generally represented; and which had, in a great measure, prevented his visiting his sister before; he was certainly in the right light line for seeing them to advantage. In Ireland there are only two ranks of people, the first circle, and those of trade; distinctions in society are more attended to than in England which very much gratified the pride and general way of thinking of Mr. Courtney, who was often shut up in his own mansion in Somersetshire, because he would not associate with families he thought inferior to his own. In Dublin he was highly gratified by the male society he met with, and Mrs. Connolly was much pleased to observe he took more pleasure in the females, than on his first coming.

Louisa had not seen Mrs. Brownlow, or her little favourite for some time, and

proposed the following morning to visit them ; Mrs. Connolly approved, and told her, she might spend the day, as she would apologize to her uncle for her absence.

Miss Burke called soon after she had left the house, and her curiosity was gratified by finding Mr. Courtney at home. Mrs. Connolly mentioned Louisa being gone to see her little favourite ; she had before told her brother the story of the child ; he was happy she had sent it away, as he had no doubt but it was some beggar's brat, and she would have degraded herself by keeping it.

Mrs. Connolly thought, there was more satisfaction in affording shelter to the " Houseless child of want," than loading with favours the children of your rich neighbours. Mr. Courtney's heart was not expanded by the delightful grace of charity, and could not ex-

actly understand the motives which actuated his sister. The argument altogether pleased Miss Burke, and it was an opening for her to instil poison into the mind of Mr. Courtney, she made herself particularly pleasant to him, and although she did not say much on the subject of the child, it could plainly be seen she thought Mr. Courtney right: when she left them, he remarked she was a most agreeable woman.

Louisa was delighted to find on her return she had escaped seeing Miss Burke; she had passed a most satisfactory day with Mrs. Brownlow, it had been quite a recreation, for her uncle's presence was certainly a restraint; she tried to love him, but it was the effort of duty, not the spontaneous offering of the heart: she imparted all her feelings to Mrs. Brownlow, who could readily understand them, and she

returned much soothed by her kind participation.

Louisa went to a ball at the castle ; her uncle accompanied her, and he was much gratified by the praise bestowed on his niece ; she was allowed to be by far, the most graceful figure who danced a minuet. Mr. Courtney was noticed by the Lord Lieutenant who had known him in England. He acknowledged the next morning to Mrs. Connolly, that he had derived great pleasure from the last night's amusement, he was pleased to see Louisa made that sort of figure in life, which he thought would ensure her marrying well ; Mrs. Connolly hoped she would marry happily.

Mr. Courtney thought well and happy synonymous terms, but Mrs. Connolly knew they were often at variance. He mentioned Mr. Morrice as a good match for Louisa, he was cer-

tain he liked her, but her aunt could not altogether approve; for though she knew Louisa had a preference for him beyond what she felt for any other male acquaintance, yet it was not that true regard, that affection, which excludes all others, and leaves the mind nothing to rest on but the object beloved. This, Mrs. Connolly knew was necessary in the marriage state; she had fully experienced the misery, a failure of it occasioned, for which, neither fortune nor situation could compensate; and she could not agree with Mr. Courtney that it would be a desirable thing for Louisa to marry Mr. Morrice, though she owned that in point of fortune and rank it would be a desirable match.

Mr. Courtney was always positive; his arguments were not easily combatted and he would not exactly be brought to give up any plan he had

made up his mind on. Mrs. Connolly never argued, she thought it was a sort of warfare females had not any thing to do with ; it often, she knew, weakened affection, and never convinced.

Louisa coming into the room, ended the conversation ; and Lord Rossmore calling soon after, strengthened the wish he had of seeing Louisa united to that family.

The Earl came to Dublin to consult a physician : although an invalid, he made a point of calling on Mr. Courtney, to invite him to Rossmore castle, and entreated Mrs. Connolly and her niece would accompany him, which they agreed to do. Mr. Courtney's pride was highly gratified by this attention. Lady Almeria was equally pleased at the prospect of seeing them at Rossmore castle, and declared existence would appear long until they

met again. Before she went, she begged Louisa would take her to see the poor Fisherman's widow ; this she readily consented to do.

They called on Mrs. Barnard in their way, and took Miss Blagrove with them, who informed Miss Courtney how much she had reformed Mrs. Barnard ; that she now constantly admitted her children to see her, attended to them, and indeed conducted herself more rationally than she had ever been accustomed to do, much to the satisfaction of Mr. Barnard.

This conversation lasted until they reached the once happy cabin of Sullivan ; they were delighted to find the poor woman much better ; a ray of reason seemed to break on her mind, and on Louisa's asking her how she did, she mildly answered better, but she had still a weight on her head,—
“ Still a something here madam,” put

ting her hand to her fore-head—"I try to recollect where I have been, but in vain—my poor Sullivan too is gone—but he is gone for ever!" She looked round with a vacant stare! The dashing of the waves that almost washed the window of her little cabin, seemed to distract her, the recollection of her loss was revived and the phren-sied look of wild despair again took possession of her.

Lady Almeria whose heart was made of the softest materials, felt deeply this affecting scene; reason seemed about to resume its empire, the recollecting thought gave a serious expression to the face, and to the mind of the contemplative opened a large field for reflection; they conversed on her melancholy situation on their way home. Lady Almeria, sanguine and warm in every thing that interested her, declared the poor sufferer should be removed

from a scene, that kept alive painful recollections, and added to her sorrow. Her brother, she was sure, would give her a cabin, and the parties dining together, the whole plan was arranged. Lord Rossmore readily promised an asylum, and entered with so much feeling into the cause, that it was settled she should go with some of his domestics, when they returned to the country, Louisa taking on herself the arrangement of every thing necessary for her removal.

Louisa had before felt some little reluctance to go to Castle Rossmore ; but the kindness of all the inhabitants, bound her to them, and she now looked forward with pleasure to the fulfilment of her engagement. Lady Almeria invited Miss Maude out of compliment to her ; there was a little drawback to the pleasure Louisa felt, as she could not avoid seeing her uncle wished

her to marry Mr. Morrice, and she feared something in his manner would betray it, and that he might suppose she had misconstrued his attention, and like too many females, have placed to the score of love what he only meant as friendship ; for after any admiration of her, he put on a degree of restraint which made it evident he did not wish her to suppose any thing more tender existed. Louisa felt there were many degrees, but thought Mr. Morrice would not give her credit for making the distinction.

CHAP. VII.

MRS. Connolly, proposed that the whole party should go to the play in the evening, as Mr. Courtney had not yet seen the theatre. Mr. Morrice would have attended them but was prevented, by being engaged to dine late with some friends. Miss Maude joined their party, Mr. Courtney was their only beau. The Lord and Lady Lieutenant were there, and the house was, as usual on that occasion, much crowded.

Soon after the play began, Mr Wayley entered, and much to the surprise and annoyance of Louisa joined their party.

Before the play was half over, there

was a cry of fire, which caused general alarm, and the bustle of getting out, so dreadful on those occasions, immediately commenced. Miss Maude, like all volatile spirits, was in fact a great coward; she vociferated loudly for the party to move on. Mrs. Connolly wished to wait until the first burst of the crowd was over, but Miss Maude was in such perfect agony she pulled Mr. Courtney on. Mr. Wayley wished to assist Louisa, but she, anxious for the fate of her aunt, entreated if he regarded her, to take care of Mrs. Connolly, and taking the other arm of her uncle, said, if Mr. Wayley would attend only to her aunt, he would confer an everlasting obligation on her. This was a bribe Wayley could not withstand, and he resigned Louisa to the care of Mr. Courtney.

The crowd became immense, and they could hardly struggle through;

at length a violent burst came, and separating her from Mr. Courtney, she was left to struggle alone. Alarmed, she tried to reach him, but was prevented, being hurried on by the pressure of the multitude; almost in despair, she knew not what to do, but at last reaching the door, found herself in the street, alone, though surrounded by numbers; but it was impossible to remain in one spot, the crowd still rushing out; and she followed a chair for some time thinking it a protection; but on its suddenly leaving her, and almost fainting with terror, she exclaimed: "What shall I do? oh! where is my party?"

"Surely I know that voice!" said a gentleman, stopping. — It was Mr. Morrice. — "Miss Courtney, and alone! Where is your aunt?"

"Oh! I don't know," said Louisa, "I have been separated from them;

how happy I am in having met you, for you will protect me."

"With my life!" replied Mr. Morrice; "be under no further apprehension, dear Miss Courtney, for now you are safe."—"But where," she exclaimed, "can my dear aunt be?"

She then told him of the fire. "No doubt," said Mr. Morrice, "but they are all gone home; I will endeavour to get a carriage, or a chair:" which he attempted, but could not leave her to go in pursuit of one. He told her, as they all seemed engaged, they had better walk than wait in the cold; and Louisa was so impatient to hear what became of her aunt, that she readily agreed: not being a fine lady, she had not lost the use of her limbs. Half the women in Dublin would have been in dismay at this great exertion, but it was trifling to Louisa.

In a narrow crossing, owing to the

great crowds flocking from the theatre, they were stopped by meeting two chairs, one going and the other coming; they were obliged to stand by to let them pass. The flambeaux, held by the servants, at that moment threw a strong glare of light over their faces, and discovered, to the lady in one of the chairs, Louisa, leaning on the arm of Mr. Morrice. The lady was Miss Burke, going from one party to another; this was a noble piece of information for her to carry to the next rout. She did not know of the fire; and it was an event that must be mentioned to her *very best friends*: that she had absolutely, not a moment before, met Miss Courtney alone, familiarly leaning on the arm of Mr. Morrice!

Full of importance, she entered the drawing-room of her friend, where she related the event, with a hundred dis-

agreeable remarks, as to what had induced Miss Courtney to be walking, at that hour with Mr. Morrice. For her part; she had always found it the case, that your very prudent ladies occasionally did more imprudent actions than those who did not possess so much; and with one of her most insinuating smiles, said, “Now, my dear Lady Fitzpatrick, who really likes a little proper dash, would not have walked out with a gentleman alone, at this hour.”

“Oh, horrid!” screamed Lady Fitzpatrick, “why, the very idea is petrifying—conceive me walking on Essex-bridge!—Men are delightful creatures to be sure, but I could not do that for the most agreeable”—and looking at Lord Mountmorrice very languishingly, “Do you think I could, my lord?”

At that moment she forgot how often she had met his lordship in the

Rotunda gardens, when her husband was from home on business, or solacing himself with some of the first characters in Dublin. Yet Lord Fitzpatrick did not neglect his wife ; but the line he was in, necessarily took him a great deal from her society.

How light is the mind of that female who cannot rationally employ her hours in the absence of her husband ! In a well regulated mind, absence increases regard, but Lady Fitzpatrick was not of that description ; consequently, calculated to give due credit to any thing Miss Burke might say on the subject of scandal ; and she could not help feeling a pleasure in having this paragon of perfection, as she sneeringly styled Louisa, lowered in the opinion of the world.

Whilst they were talking her over, Louisa, all innocence, reached her home ; the party had just arrived before

her, and were dispatching messengers every way in quest of her ; Miss Maude was fortunately relieved, as she feared she had been the cause of her losing hold of her uncle's arm. They were astonished to see her under the protection of Mr. Morrice, which Louisa soon explained.

Mr. Wayley looked dissatisfied and suspicious ; Miss Maude, seeing his chagrin, could not help joking him about it ; and took occasion, at supper, to whisper to him, that she feared he had a rival in Mr. Morrice. Mr. Wayley could not bear this idea, but began to fear it was the case ; he now recollected how very strenuous she had been that he should take care of her aunt ; and he thought the whole was a scheme which he had been the dupe of. There would have been but little conversation but for Miss Maude, who was very droll about her safety ; which, she

said, was entirely owing to the very fast hold she took of Mr. Courtney, for when she could no longer keep his arm, she had taken his coat, and she much feared it had suffered in the cause: "Let me see, my dear sir." and giving him a most amazing twirl round, almost discomposed the gravity and stately style of his general deportment.

The servants returned who had been sent to find Miss Courtney; and they brought an account it was merely some of the scenery that had been on fire; but it had not spread further.

Miss Maude said she would stay in Sackville-street that night, for Mr. Wayley looked so savage from his disappointment, she feared he would way-lay the chair and kill her; and "Unless my dear good guardian here would see me home, I cannot venture."

Mr. Courtney, with all the politeness of the old school, said, that he should

certainly have great pleasure in escorting her ; but she declared she would not put his gallantry further to the test ; she thought it would be better to take Mr. Morrice, who appeared to be a knight-errant, going about to preserve distressed damsels. The blind goddess had been particularly fortunate in throwing such a prize in his way as Miss Courtney ;—“ A prize,” said Mr. Wayley, “ which I should have been proud to have protected, and which I only relinquished to obey her wishes.”

Mrs. Connolly replied, she was much obliged by his care of her ; it certainly was great self-denial.

Miss Maude observed, she had no doubt but the whole story would appear in the papers ; and that the merit of Mr. Wayley would be fully portrayed ; “ How, in obedience to the commands of his dulcinea, he left her to take care of her aunt ; that this same

dulcinea wandering alone, had met with another knight of equal prowess, who rescued her in the hour of danger, and brought her exultingly to her friends ; and that the two knights were both contending for the honour of her hand.

Mr. Morrice laughed at her rattle ; but it was too much for Mr. Wayley, who, fond of raillery himself, felt it more keenly from another ; and he feared, by way of amusement, Miss Maude would tell the story with her own embellishments, and that he would get laughed at for taking care of the aunt instead of the niece ; he knew his gay friends would not give him credit for the good humour of the action, and that he should be quizzed by all the bucks about town. He tried, however, to appear composed ; the party separated for the night ; Miss Maude remained in Sackville-street, as had been her intention, it was only for

the sake of a rattle she said she was going.

The next morning Louisa was made happy by a letter from her father, brought by a ship passing them at sea. He informed her, that so far his voyage had been a pleasant one, that he should go to a certain latitude with the fleet, but hoped, by the spring, to see his beloved child; he trusted she still continued to be happy; said he had little of an interesting nature to communicate, as there was a sameness in a sailor's life at sea—"But," he continued, "we are all happy, and I have no care but that of being separated from my child." He wrote a long letter to his sister by the same conveyance. The pleasure these letters gave to both was a silent reproach to Mr. Courtney, that brother whom he had so much slighted, was rich in the possession of the sincere love of an amiable daughter

and sister. The obduracy of his father could not take from him these qualifications, and by his own active exertions, he was exempt from requiring any pecuniary aid at his hands. The envy which had always stained his character still tinctured his disposition, and he did not feel really comfortable when he saw Louisa press the dear letter to her bosom, and rapturously exclaim, "Now I am happy : the best of men is safe !" Mr. Courtney wished he could have excited such feelings, and almost repented he had not married, that he might have a daughter to love him so sincerely.

The state of an old bachelor is generally a melancholy one ; his home which should be the seat of delight, becomes a dull retirement ; no enlivening companion to cheer his solitary hours, no children to look up to him with respect and love ; his feelings turned

back to himself, his temper gets soured, and he repents when too late, that pride or avarice prevented his entering on that state, where only in this world, true pleasure can be found.

When Mr. Courtney considered his forlorn state at home, he almost made up his mind to marry, and thought Lady Almeria Morrice was of all women best calculated for him, and that thus by making a double match, he might add to the honor of his family. This idea softened his heart somewhat towards his brother; he hoped they should meet as friends when he returned, and trusted Louisa's conduct would be such as to unite them still more closely, and he said to her, "On your part I expect obedience, for you must recollect you cannot have the bequest of your grand-father, unless you marry with my approbation.

This was immaterial to Louisa who

was hardly sensible of the value of money.

Miss Burke called, that morning, on all her particular friends, to tell them the extraordinary circumstance of her having met Miss Courtney, at a late hour, walking with Mr. Morrice! She found very attentive listeners to this tale, till she reached Mrs. Barnard, for she actually took the trouble of going to Clontarf; she told her the story so speciously that she had no doubt it would gain due credit. Mrs. Barnard coolly answered, "There was no doubt but Miss Courtney had some very sufficient motive for doing so, for she was too good and amiable to do any thing that was contrary to propriety." Whilst she was speaking Mr. Tarleton came in.

"My good sir," said Mrs. Barnard, "I never felt more happy to see you,

for you will assist me in vindicating a character I think purity itself."

"And who may that be, Mrs. Barnard, you have so high an opinion of?"

"It is," she replied, "Miss Courtney."

"And can any one for a moment traduce that young lady?" said Mr. Tarleton.

"Dear Mrs. Barnard," replied Miss Burke, quite alarmed, "how hastily you judge."

"No, madam, pardon me, it is you who judge too hastily."

"Well," answered Mr. Tarleton, "as I must be a little technical, pray, ladies, state your case."

"Why," replied Miss Burke, "I merely informed Mrs. Barnard that I met Miss Courtney walking with Mr. Morrice alone, at a very unseasonable hour; and as I know Mrs. Barnard thinks her

all perfection, I wished to account for it, as it certainly had a strange appearance."

"Strange!" observed Mr. Tarleton, "that a young woman, who had been alarmed by a cry of fire in the theatre, and who, escaping from the horrors of it, should be happy to put herself under the protection of a gentleman she knew so well as Mr. Morrice, being separated in the crowd from her own party!"

Miss Burke looked astonished; said she had not heard any thing of there having been a fire; and it certainly had an odd appearance.—

"Then you should have suspended your opinion, madam, until you could have accounted for it; and not wish to tarnish the fair fame of another, particularly that of Miss Courtney; for never does the whisper of detraction escape her lips; her mind harbours no suspicion; her principles are founded

on the pure principles of the gospel; universal charity reigns in her bosom; and I would wish to say to all the erring daughters of frailty, ‘Go and do thou likewise.’”

Mr. Tarleton’s voice was firm but elevated, as he vindicated the character of Miss Courtney, he spoke from conviction; his intimacy in Mrs. Connolly’s family gave him every opportunity of seeing and knowing the virtues of her whose cause he espoused; many of her perfections, unknown to the world, he was acquainted with; for her goodness was of that gentle kind, it flowed like the current of a clear stream, which murmurs unobserved by the multitude. Mr. Tarleton well knew the character of Miss Burke; he had heard her insinuations before against Louisa, and he was happy this opportunity offered of reprimanding her.

Miss Burke put on an air of import-

ance and said with composure, she was happy he had put it into her power to clear up the mysterious business; and with all the affectation of real goodness, took her leave, though in her heart very angry.

Mrs. Barnard was delighted Mr. Tarleton had given her so complete a set down, for she had often heard her injurious aspersions.

“If scandal could always be so combated as it has been this morning,” said Mr. Tarleton, “that noxious weed would soon be rooted out of society; and how much our happiness would be increased; for the most innocent actions may be made criminal by the perversion of a malevolent mind.”

“You would hardly suppose, my dear sir,” replied Mrs. Barnard, “that Miss Burke has put an uncharitable construction on Miss Courtney’s finding the child when she was walking

out with Mr. Morrice, that they brought her home; and that there was no doubt but it was Mr. Morrice's child, which Louisa, from her great regard to him, fostered and noticed; that Mrs. Connolly wished so much to see them united, she winked at it to secure his marrying her!"

Mr. Tarleton was all astonishment that so much wickedness could exist, and such wilful prevarication; he determined to investigate the business without giving Mrs. Connolly or Louisa any trouble. Mr. Tarleton was a true friend, that gem so rarely to be found, but when once obtained, cannot be prized too much. Mrs. Connolly knew his value, for she had tried him in the day of adversity. He left Mrs. Barnard, assuring her he would strike at the root of the evil.

CHAP. VIII.

AS Mr. Wayley feared, the adventure of the play-house became a subject of general conversation ; he was quizzed by all his acquaintance, for allowing the quiet Mr. Morrice to carry off Miss Courtney. He met a posse of young men in the Phoenix Park, all of whom attacked him : “ What delicious moments,” said Lord Mountmorrice, “ you have lost ; how many delightful tender things you might have whispered into the fair one’s ear whilst conducting her home ; she, all gratitude for your attention, must have listened to the tale of love, and you might feelingly exclaim

“ Oh ! happy state, when each alike are pleased,
“ The hand that squeezeth, and the hand that’s
squeezed.”

A general laugh followed this remark; Wayley could hardly stand the joke, and determined in his own mind to ask Mr. Morrice if he intended any thing serious to Miss Courtney; he certainly felt a little jealous should Mr. Morrice be a candidate for her hand, which he feared had been the reason of her refusing him; for if not prepossessed in favour of another, he thought she could hardly withstand his numerous attractions. Impetuous to a degree, he no sooner returned than he hastened to Mr. Morrice's lodgings, and was fortunate in finding him at home. Mr. Wayley immediately explained the motive of his visit, and hoped he would tell him if he had any serious intentions with respect to Miss Courtney. Mr. Morrice thought that quite unnecessary to explain; and begged to know what were his reasons for asking the question. "Why, sir,

I have made an offer to Miss Courtney."

"You have then," replied Mr. Morrice, "given a great proof of your taste and discernment; has the lady accepted you?"

Wayley looked a little abashed at being obliged to say she had not.

"Then," said Mr. Morrice, "it must be immaterial what my intentions are, as it is plain she does not mean to marry you." That certainly seemed clear, yet still Wayley thought if she did not favour any one else, he might be successful; he felt he had no right to ask any further questions, though Mr. Morrice had been equivocal; they, however, parted very good friends.

On Wayley's leaving him he met Mr. Tarleton, who informed him he was just come from Mrs. Connolly's: Mr. Wayley inquired if the ladies were

at home, and on his answering in the affirmative, he determined to call, but was much mortified at being denied; Mrs. Connolly having given orders to that effect. Wayley was a man not easily to be repulsed, and he called again in the evening; still no admittance though he saw lights in the house; this was insupportable: he knew they were to go to Rossmore Castle on the following day; it was Sunday too, a dull night for Wayley—yawning and disappointed he turned from the door, but fortunately recollected the promenade was open to all who like himself wanted to kill time. He soon met his sister and party, Lord Mountmorrice attending as usual.

“Ah!” said his lordship “we were just speaking of you Wayley, and I have won my bet; Mrs. Stafford declared you were spending the evening with the quiet English woman who was

no doubt reading a sermon to you on the proper observance of the Sunday, fitting you for the sober domestic husband best suited to her taste."

"I rather think" said Lady Fitzpatrick "she reserves her private lectures for Mr. Morrice." A general laugh ensued, and Wayley that he might not be considered the object, joined in their mirth, though at the expense of the woman he wished to marry. Wayley's mind was not strong enough to stem the torrent of ridicule, and he particularly dreaded it from the tongue of Mrs. Stafford, who, not having any flirt for the night accepted his attention, and Wayley soon forgot his disappointment in not being admitted at Mrs. Connolly's.

Louisa and her Aunt were not absolutely reading a sermon on the proper observance of the Sunday, but they were practising those duties the theory of

which they were so well acquainted with : Mrs. Connolly never entered into gaiety on that day ; though she was not one of those bigotted characters who think an abstraction from the world a proof of their virtue ; rational society at home after the duties of the day, she did not object to, and felt she was not erring by inviting her long tried friends, Mr. Tarleton and Mrs Brownlow to spend the evening with them ; she knew a little quiet society dissipated the cares of both, and as she would be absent some time gave this evening wholly to them. Mrs. Brownlow sadly regretted their absence, a weakness in her eyes prevented her mixing much with the world, and their company was of consequence to her ; it cheered many a lonely hour. The child indeed was a great comfort and amusement to her, and she could not for a moment bear her absence.

Miss Maude came to them to be ready to set off in the morning, all delight at the idea of her visit. Mr. Spencer was gone and she felt nothing particularly to interest her; variety, charming variety, she hoped would revive her spirits, and give her the power of driving from her mind a man who seemed to have forgotten her. She accompanied Mrs. Connolly and Louisa; Mr. Morrice took Mr. Courtney with him. Rossmore Castle being only thirty miles from Dublin they reached it in time for a late dinner. Mrs. Connolly had visited it before, and to her there was nothing new to be admired, but to the eye of strangers it was striking. Louisa and Miss Maude were charmed, as they approached the grand Domain which was kept in the finest order: a piece of water before the house covered with every sort of wild fowl, first claimed their admiration,

and behind embosomed in trees, stood the fine old castle, from which the title of the family was derived, the venerable domestics who attended in the hall, by their respectful attention, prepared them for the reception they were to meet with from their noble host, who affectionately welcomed them.

The address of Lord Rossmore was truly pleasing; he had been in early life disappointed in love; this had thrown a pensive sadness over his manner, which age and infirmities were not calculated to remove, but no fretfulness appeared in his character; he was a resigned and patient sufferer.

Lady Almeria was all rapture at meeting her friends; dinner was soon announced, and they were shewn into a grand dining-room fitted up in the antique style, and hung round with family pictures in their different costumes of the times in which they were painted.

The dinner was served on massy old-fashioned plate; there was all that was noble without the least appearance of form, and this happy party felt perfectly at home; every thing combining to give them this satisfactory feeling.

Mr. Courtney looked around him, and swelling with importance regarded Louisa with increased admiration, fancying she would one day be mistress of this charming place. In the morning the ladies were delighted with the situation of the castle; a shrubbery immediately round the house mostly composed of ever-greens, gave it the appearance of perpetual spring.

Louisa was happy when Lady Almeria proposed walking out, as she was anxious to call on the poor fisherman's widow; she was concerned to hear a very sad account of her health. "She is," said Lady Almeria, "sinking fast with-

out having any complaint we can apply a remedy for."

Whilst the rest of the party were strolling about in the plantations, Lady Almeria took Louisa to a neat cabin, where she had comfortably placed this melancholy object of their benevolence, who perfectly recollected Louisa, and spoke most gratefully of her kindness, and Lady Almeria's; hoped to be able when her strength returned to support herself, and no longer to be a burthen on their goodness. Louisa, feared there was little probability of her strength's returning, for all stamina appeared to be gone. Mrs. Connolly felt anxious to see her, and went to the cabin whilst the rest of the party continued their walk. Mr. Morrice joined them, and they strolled through different parts of the plantation. Vistas were cut to afford them a view of the lake, and several neat cottages appeared, which the earl

had built to beautify his estate. Much pleased with their morning's ramble, they returned to the castle, and Lady Almeria after dinner amused them by shewing the house. They were highly pleased with its antique magnificence and grandeur: Louisa declared at supper she could fancy herself a princess in an enchanted castle. The earl trusted no prince in disguise would run off with her, as he hoped to keep her a prisoner for some time; he wished they could contrive it for life, and looked significantly at his brother; who, musing, did not seem attending to what they were saying, but lost in thought, was "chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy."

Miss Maude, whose volubility never forsook her, rapturously praised every thing; her feelings were always in the superlative.

Louisa admired, but it was with so

much judgment, that it could not fail of being gratifying to the possessor.

There is in praise a delicacy to be observed which alone renders it pleasant, and Louisa possessed that happy art; the person who, indiscriminately, says every thing is charming, pays no compliment; it is not the quantum but the quality of praise which steals on the mind, and finds its way to the heart.

Mr. Morrice observed with pleasure his brother's approbation of Louisa, he paid her many flattering compliments on their retiring. Miss Maude said, she wished Lord Rossmore would say so many pretty things to her—"But you are always to be my rival, you are indeed fortunate Louisa to be loved by every body"—A thought of Mr. Spencer occurred and a sigh escaped her, but Miss Maude's maxim was to enjoy the present moment and she soon resumed her gaiety.

They had a party of the neighbouring gentry to dinner, and although there was not the finished refinement of the Dublin circles there was so much heart in their manner, it compensated for the want of that higher finish, a mixture with the great world generally gives.

Louisa was surprised Lady Almeria ever left Rossmore Castle, where she appeared to be perfectly adored: the romance in her manner did not seem so much out of character in that mansion, as in the society of the metropolis; and she shone particularly when entertaining her friends. The ladies were all delighted there was a chance of her remaining some time in the country, the earl saying he would not part with her till the spring.

“I think” said Miss Maude “I shall stay with Lady Almeria for this charming spot has quite enchanted me.”

Lord Rossmore hoped the spell would continue, and he wished he had the power to extend it to the whole party—Mr. Crawford who had been paying particular attention to Miss Maude during the time of dinner, seemed pleased at the approbation she expressed of the county of Meath, he redoubled his attention, and when the company left them she was congratulated on the conquest she had made.

The next morning Mr. Courtney expressed himself much pleased with the company of the day before, "I consider myself fortunate" said the earl "in having so much good society within my reach; it has been my maxim to cultivate an acquaintance with my neighbours." This was really the case, he resided constantly on his own estate; always considering that the poor should not be neglected by those whose duty it is to protect and serve them:

he never left his tenantry in the power of a relentless steward, but attending to their wants himself, prevented oppression. He fully enjoyed the happy effects of this conduct by witnessing their comforts and increasing improvement, and he had much pleasure in showing Mr. Courtney different parts of his estate. His praise was highly gratifying, and they soon became very good friends. Lord Rossmore's mind was stored with literary knowledge, Mr. Courtney was well informed, and he exerted all his powers to make himself pleasing to the earl: he had now a double motive, for the idea of marrying Lady Almeria still existed; indeed it had strengthened since his visit to the castle, and he tried to evince his regard by paying her the most profound respect: his attentions were not unpleasing to Lady Almeria, as they perfectly accorded with her ideas of pro-

priety ; she never crossed the room but he arose ; if she dropped her glove, he immediately picked it up, and presented it with the utmost decorum. Miss Maude was much amused at observing these attentions, and diverted Mrs. Connolly and Louisa by her remarks ; she said, she found the walls of Rossmore Castle were most congenial to love, she must therefore have a lover, and would certainly set her cap at the earl ; hoped he would profit by the example of Mr. Courtney by paying her the same sort of respectful attentions, “ For when my dear Louisa are our young lovers so assiduous ? No, they think too much of themselves ; I will be an old man’s darling I am determined.”

Just as she had finished speaking, Lord Rossmore entered ; Miss Maude looked confused fearing he might have overheard the last part of her speech ;

but his manner soon convinced her he had not: he came to ask the ladies, if they would take a drive, the day being so fine, he wished to shew them the surrounding country. They readily assented, and the carriages were immediately ordered. They were delighted as they drove along, the county of Meath being a grazing county, and, in general well planted, strongly resembles Somersetshire, which recommended it very much to Mr. Courtney. They passed through the town of Navan, and on their getting out of their carriages, they were astonished to see the number of beggars that surrounded them; Louisa unaccustomed to the sight of so much wretchedness in England, held her purse in her hand and soon emptied the contents;—“You would not do to live in Ireland” said Miss Maude “why my dear Louisa were you always to give to the

mendicants no fortune could support it."

"But how" replied Louisa "can we pass so much misery without relieving it."

Lord Rossmore regretted poor rates were not established as in England; he considered them as the most equitable and certain mode of providing for the poor, for then the men of large fortune with narrow hearts, would be obliged to subscribe their quantum to the support of fellow-creatures, which they might otherwise withhold: "There, my dear sir," he continued addressing himself to Mr. Courtney, "you have the advantage of us, as you have indeed in many other instances."

Mr. Courtney felt the proud superiority and was gratified to hear it acknowledged; he in return complimented the earl on the beauty of the county

of Meath. They returned to dinner much pleased with all they had seen, the half-hour bell having rung, they hurried up stairs to dress. Mr. Morrice who had not been with them in the morning was delighted on meeting Louisa at dinner; all restraint of manner seemed to be thrown off, and he paid her the most decided attention; seemed to have no wish, but hers, no pleasure but when he was conversing with her. It could not be unobserved by the party, and to Mr. Courtney it afforded the sincerest pleasure.

Louisa who seldom suffered a day to pass without going to visit the poor fisherman's widow, went to see her soon after dinner, as she had been prevented in the morning; it was but a short distance from the house. She found her much dejected; great anxiety seemed to press on her mind, and

she owned to Louisa, she trembled for the fate of her daughter; she found her weakness every day increasing and should she die, her girl would be left to strangers: "Had my dear Sullivan lived," she continued "all his earnings would have been for her, the boys can take care of themselves." Louisa begged her to be comforted, that she would always be a friend to her, and she had every thing to hope from Lady Almeria.

"Ah! she is very good madam, and I ought not to despair, but I cannot help it; I feel my end approaching and my fortitude forsakes me. Should Lady Almeria leave the castle, my child will then be left to strangers, and at her tender years, I tremble for her safety." Louisa was affected and surprised to hear her speak so sensibly; her language was good, and her ideas far above the common. So hard did

anxiety for her child press upon her mind, that Louisa feared it might cause a relapse, and determined on using some means to remove this existing trouble.

CHAP. IX.

WHILST she was saying all that kindness could dictate, the door was softly opened; Miss Maude and Mr. Morrice stood before them—Louisa was astonished and hurt at her friend's thoughtlessness, who, she knew, must be the means of bringing him; she feared it would agitate the invalid, and getting up to go, the poor woman eagerly grasped her hand; she appeared to have lost the power of utterance, but still detaining her, fixed her eyes full on Mr. Morrice, who struck by her earnestness, in turn contemplated the figure of the invalid, who wrapped in a blanket appeared hardly human; her sunk eyes, and pallid cheeks, gave her a most deathlike appearance.

Mr. Morrice seemed as willing as Louisa to hasten from a scene that shocked him so much. Again Louisa turned to her, saying, "We will leave you now, as we are too many."

"Stay madam," she said "and tell me the name of that gentleman."

"It is Mr. Morrice," answered Louisa, "brother to the Earl of Rossmore your benefactor."

The widow bowed, and seemed inclined to speak, but again utterance appeared to fail her.

Louisa felt alarmed lest her delirium was returning; and gave her in charge of her maid who had come to attend her mistress home.

"That" said Mr. Morrice "is a melancholy object: I had no idea she was in so pitiable a condition." "I thought so" replied Miss Maude, "and therefore determined on taking you, for men's hearts should be softened." "But"

said Louisa, " You should have considered the delicate state of the poor woman's health ; it was evident seeing a perfect stranger affected her."

" You may lecture me as you please," replied Miss Maude, " but what could I do with Mr. Morrice ? He was so cross in your absence, so fearful you would take cold, and apprehensive that your maid was not a sufficient protection for you, I really believe he would by this time have been in a high fever ; and then you would have had two patients to attend to instead of one ; therefore you must own I acted on the best."

Louisa observed, it was fortunate every one knew Miss Maude's rattle : when they joined the party, the conversation turned on the illness of the invalid.

Lord Rossmore begged his sister would give her every comfort, and if

necessary, send for a medical man. Mrs. Connolly's health was so delicate, she retired early to rest, and Miss Maude's spirits generally exhausting her in the course of the day, she was always ready to go at the same time. Lady Almeria and Louisa, always sat up some time after them; it was a treat to Louisa to have an uninterrupted conversation with that lady; she found there was a seriousness in her character, which in the gay world, had not appeared, and time stole imperceptibly away in her society. When they were alone, "How grateful" said Louisa, "I am to Lord Rossmore for his kindness to this poor woman, I feel it as a favour conferred on myself."

"I think you value this favour too highly" replied her Ladyship, "for he only does his duty: Providence has blest him with a large fortune; he has no family, and the necessitous become

his children; for of those to whom much is given, my dear Louisa, much is required. The goods of this life are lent us for a few short years, and we must no doubt all give a strict account whether we have properly used or abused them."

Louisa was delighted to hear Lady Almeria speak her own sentiments! How amiable, she thought, is all this family: she hardly knew which excelled; Mr. Morrice was her first acquaintance, and, for this reason, she gave him the preference.

Several invitations came from the neighbouring families to dinners which were accepted, and in the cheerful pleasant society the country afforded they spent many agreeable days, always returning delighted from every party where hospitality and good humour gave a zest to their enjoyments.

The report that Miss Courtney the

beautiful English girl, and Mr. Morrice were to be married, became general; and all who were well-wishers of the inhabitants of Rossmore Castle were delighted at it. The amiable and conciliating manners of Louisa had gained the affections of all who had seen her; and thinking the earl would not marry, they were pleased in having the prospect of so charming a mistress to preside at the castle. Mr. Morrice was frequently joked about it, and his vanity could not but be flattered. Louisa was not aware of the general topic of the neighbourhood, but, as the feelings of her heart dictated, observed the same unreserved manner to him as ever, which very much strengthened the report; and although many admired Miss Courtney, yet none presumed to pay her particular attention, thinking her engaged to Mr. Morrice.

Miss Maude had a true lover in Mr

Crawford, who visited often at the castle; he was rather an oddity, and amused her very much; she laughed and chatted with him, in fact, to draw all his eccentricities forth for her amusement; he did not set it down to that score, and as all are prone to vanity, he thought she was in love with him, and was not a little vain of being united to Lord Doneraile's niece; not doubting but his acres, in which he abounded, would ensure him success: here he was mistaken; Miss Maude knew it was a desirable thing that she should be settled, yet she could not forego her principles; even stern necessity would not be sufficient to make her do so; and had she supposed Mr. Crawford fancied he had inspired love, she would not have spoken so much to him. The idea of Mr. Spencer still lived in her heart, and fond imagination led her to hope she might yet be his, "For

love will hope where reason would despair." She followed the advice of Miss Courtney in doing every thing to divert her attention from thinking too much of him, and for this reason had amused herself with Mr. Crawford, but she was perfectly astonished when calling one morning, and finding her alone, he declared himself, and asked her leave to write to her uncle. This had such an effect on Miss Maude that she burst into a violent fit of laughter, whilst the poor trembling love-sick swain stood half dead with fright before her; the more abashed he looked, the more her risible faculties were roused, and she left the room to compose herself. Going to the ladies she told them, when she could speak, what had happened; "And where" said Mrs. Connolly "have you left the unhappy man?"

"In the parlour" my dear madam,

“ where you may go and relieve him, if you please, for I am sure I will not ;” and bursting into a fit of laughter, said, —“ Had you but seen him, my dear Louisa, with the tears starting into his disagreeable eyes, and his whole frame shook by agitation, you would be as much amused as I am.”

It is true Mr. Crawford's person was not much in his favour, weak eyes, red hair, and a bad form, did not make him an object of love ; but Louisa declared he was to be pitied, and pity she remarked to her friends melts the mind to love. But this only amused her still more, and there was no quieting her, indeed they were all infected by her merriment, and amused at the ludicrous account she gave of the manner of his making the offer. Louisa could not help thinking how different it would have been had Mr. Spencer sued ; and reminded her of this, to take

in some degree from the keen edge of her satire. She could not deny the truth of the charge, and owned her friend was right ; “ Then ” said Louisa, “ do as you would be done by—and do not be too severe on your poor lover.”

Lady Almeria who had by the rattling Miss Maude, been informed of this event, good humouredly enjoyed the amusement it gave her gay young friend, but going to him, was determined to ask him to dinner as a punishment to her; he could not resist the pleasure of staying as Lady Almeria assured him her brother would be displeased if she suffered him to go away before dinner; and he was so much consoled by her conciliating manner that on entering the room where the ladies were assembled, he did not feel that awkwardness which generally attends a person on those occasions. But there

was none of those private titterings which too often happen amongst the misses of the party, for how many a poor wight has been discomfited on entering a drawing room, by the private whispers and half-suppressed laugh from some of the females. This is a mode of amusement too often practised in the country by young ladies, who having had a boarding-school-education, think themselves competent to judge of the manners of all they associate with; but girls who have been well educated at home never fall into those private caballings; their politeness well improved by the constant attention and culture of a fond parent, springs from the heart, and the civility that flows from it is soft, pleasing, and unassuming. Home-education nurtures all the finer feelings, for there a child practises no deceit to cheat her governess, no private contrivances to

get at what is forbidden, but under the eye of a parent grows up the dutiful daughter, and when called upon to fill a more important station, the duties which adorned the child, appear still brighter in that of the wife and mother. Of this latter description was Louisa and her friend, the former indeed had been peculiarly favoured by her father so closely attending to her. Miss Maude had likewise been educated at home, but losing her mother early, who was sister to Lady Doneraile, she had been more thrown into life, and indulged too much by her aunt, whose goodness of heart led her to pay her the fondest attention; and this kindness had given unbounded reins to the volatile disposition of her niece; but it was all rattle, for she was truly well-disposed, and on the representation of Mrs. Connolly before dinner, that Mr. Crawford had certainly paid her a compliment

by making her an offer, and that she should treat him with politeness, she determined on doing so, and Mr. Crawford's pleasureable sensations when he left the party, almost made him fancy he had been accepted.

Miss Maude's lover and her drollery about him afforded much amusement; she affected to be very serious the following day, and asked Lady Almeria what she would advise her to do; for not having answered Mr. Crawford, she had still in her power to accept or refuse. Lady Almeria declared she could not recommend him, though she would be a great acquisition to the neighbourhood of Castle Rossmore.

"Thank you my dear Lady Almeria," said Miss Maude, "I feared you would have favoured the cause."
"That," replied she "would be impossible; I cannot praise his person or mind."

Mr. Crawford was a short thick man, his form athletic enough for six feet, a pair of ill-made legs, and knees too fond of touching each other; his face broad and unmeaning with very weak eyes; but Mr. Crawford had a very large fortune which, in his estimation, was every thing; and he likewise thought his person was not bad. He had never been much off his own estate, a considerable part of which he farmed; and his ideas being limited to that one point rendered him not a very pleasant companion to ladies; and Lady Almeria could scarcely reprove Miss Maude's remarks on the oddity of his appearance.

Louisa's engagements did not prevent her thinking on and attending to the poor widow, whose depression increased; she determined on using some means to remove it; and thought giving

her a sum of money, before she went, to be applied solely to the use of the girl, might quiet her anxiety. The kindness of her father, and the generosity of her aunt had made her rich, as she never spent her allowance; and having fifty pounds to spare, she thought it could not be better appropriated, than to the relief of a "mind diseased;" she could not pluck from memory "a rooted sorrow;" but might in some degree alleviate its poignancy. No sooner had she determined on this plan, than her mind felt more at ease, she imparted her intention to Mrs. Connolly, and it met her perfect approbation. She offered to add to the sum if necessary: Louisa thought for the present it would be enough, as it was merely to quiet the mind of the poor creature, that was so much perturbed. With this sum in possession she would feel that her

daughter would not be left destitute, and might again recover her composure, and with it her strength.

As her maid was assisting to undress her, she told her, that the poor widow was much worse, and hoped to see her in the morning. Louisa determined on taking the donation with her, and not wishing the rest of the party to know the extent of her charity, rose early that she might go alone. It was a fine, frosty morning; with the blush on her cheek, as fresh as the air she inhaled, she crossed the lawn and was soon at the cabin of the sick woman; on entering she started at seeing a man whose appearance bespoke him above the common, seated by the bed-side of the invalid; he arose and bowed, she was about retiring, when the stranger courteously begged she would come in, for he presumed she was the excellent, the perfect being the poor woman had

been describing: her countenance proclaimed it.

From common lips, this would have sounded like flattery, but who that looked at the stranger could suspect him of it? Sterne's monk could not have appeared more touching; the silver hairs that were scattered over his head, secured your respect, whilst the mild benignity of his countenance spoke to the heart; its expression was feeling, tempered by religion, and in his deportment appeared respect, without submission, Louisa courtesied more gracefully than when entering a drawing-room, for the being before her inspired her with awe; the purse which she held in her hand, intending to give to this poor woman appeared useless, for mind alone seemed requisite at this meeting.

The priest (for so she found the venerable man to be), had just ad-

ministered extreme unction ; the children were still kneeling round the bed of their dying parent, whilst the venerable father read a concluding prayer. Had an Atheist been present he would have been staggered ; for he must have seen the soothing power of religion, as the affecting groupe joined in prayers for the departing soul of their mother !

Louisa instinctively dropped on her knees ; her for whom they prayed was tranquil and resigned ; the sobs of the weeping children alone interrupted the solemnity of the scene, for in her they were about to lose their all, and they were old enough to feel the extent of their misfortune. Louisa could bear it no longer ; with streaming eyes she left the house, her feelings almost amounted to agony. The tears blinded her so she could scarcely see the path ; in this state she was met by Mr. Morrice, who, hearing she had strolled

out, walked to meet her. She had untied the blue riband of her gipsy-hat to give her free respiration, and her luxuriant locks escaped from their confinement. The glow of agitation touched her whole countenance with an enchanting expression, and Mr. Morrice was lost in the contemplation of her beauty.

Louisa, when she could speak with composure, explained where she had been—"Poor creature!" said Mr. Morrice, "I thought she could not live long when I saw her. Her appearance has perfectly haunted me ever since."—"She has, I am sure," replied Louisa, "past a blameless life; had you but witnessed her mild composure it would have convinced you of her innocence. Oh! that I may so live as not to fear to die!. Who would purchase the transitory pleasures of this life, at the great price of an agonized death-bed, and

the dread of future punishment?"—"Who, indeed," said Mr. Morrice, but he shuddered as he spoke.

By this time they had reached the house, and found the party assembled in the breakfast-room, wondering at Louisa's absence. She immediately told her story, but could hardly proceed for her tears; she expressed her astonishment at finding a Roman Catholic priest with the invalid.

Lady Almeria observed she had understood, on her first coming, she was a Catholic: she had informed Mrs. Flynn, the housekeeper, that she changed her religion after she married, and that Father O'Gahagan had constantly attended her since she had come to the county of Meath.—"He is," said Lord Rossmore, "a most worthy man; no bigotry clouds his religion; universal charity reigns in his heart, and actuates his conduct; he frequently

dines with me, and I shall desire him to do so soon, for I am sure you will like his society. I never see Father O'Gahagan but I am vexed such a man as that could not marry; for, although single myself, I am an advocate for the state, and think every man's happiness increased by it."

Miss Maude said she was sure the ladies were indebted to Lord Rossmore for his good opinion of them.

"I am," continued his lordship, "much obliged to Father O'Gahagan for the good order he keeps all those belonging to his flock in; they have a high opinion of him, and it is a great advantage to have a priest of his description, whose fine mind and softened manners correct their bad propensities; and I am pleased to say the peasantry around me are in better order than is generally the case, from the great care and attention Father O'Gahagan takes of them."

Louisa was much affected during the time of breakfast ; Lord Rossmore saw her agitation, and sent to inquire for the poor woman, at the same time requesting the priest would dine with them. He then proposed they should take a drive ; they found, before they went out, that the widow was still alive, and this was some relief to Louisa.

Lord Rossmore drove her in an open carriage, which gave her an opportunity of seeing and admiring the country ; the neighbourhood was very full of gentlemen's seats ; they passed one which Louisa admired, and his lordship informed her that it was Mr. Crawford's. It was a large excellent house, and appeared to possess every comfort. " Lady Almeria," he observed, " will no doubt point it out to Miss Maude, and we shall hear at dinner whether her resolution wavers in respect to him."

Mr. Crawford at that moment passed them ; and Lord Rossmore invited him to dinner. The drive and variety had given a sweet glow of animation to the countenance of Louisa ; and Mr. Morrice contemplated her with delight as he handed her out of the carriage.

CHAP. X.

ON entering the drawing-room, they found the gentlemen were assembled, and the venerable priest with them.

Louisa, full of the scene that had interested her in the morning, and influenced by the most profound respect, went up to him, and held out her hand; which he taking, bowed and said, he was happy to see her again.—“The poor woman ——,” said Louisa, and her feelings choked her utterance.

“She is yet alive,” replied the priest, “but very feeble; when she does speak it is only to express her gratitude to you.”

The tears glistened in Louisa's eyes; Mr. Morrice, seeing she was affected, changed the subject.

Father O'Gahagan took the hint, and spoke of the general topics of the day. Mr. Morrice was more than usually attentive to Louisa at dinner; her manner in the morning had impressed him with a higher idea of her than ever. He had met the priest before the ladies came down, who had given him the whole account of what had passed, and how much Louisa's presence had composed the feelings of the dying woman.

Mr. Morrice was not surprised, "For," observed he, "the presence of Miss Courtney would smooth the ruggedness of any death-bed." He spoke this with energy, and Father O'Gahagan looked at him with earnestness, but did not answer. There was that in his face which mocked description; if it could be imagined, it was surprise mingled with compassion; stern severity and scrutiny seemed fixed on a

countenance which nature had formed gentle and unsuspicious. His particular attention was directed to Mr. Morrice; whenever that gentleman spoke to Louisa, the priest, like a guard, appeared alive to every thing he said.

Mr. Crawford's manner was truly amusing, and Miss Maude could not help indulging in a little coquetry; the ladies declared, when they went into the drawing-room, that they had never seen a man exert himself to please as he had done; but unfortunately Mr. Crawford's exertions were not calculated to answer the end he desired, and instead of doing so, he generally caused laughter.

Soon after tea the priest was called out of the room, and Louisa guessed it was to the invalid. He did not stay long, but returning, went up to her.

"You have been with the poor woman," said Louisa, "how is she?"

“Happy,” he replied, “for she died the death of the righteous!” Louisa could hardly speak; but after a pause, taking the reverend man’s hand, “I will go to the children,”—“You need not,” said the priest, “your gentle nature would suffer too much—your kindness soothed the poor creature when living, and then only she required your aid; now her spirit has left its mortal habitation, you would be shocked.”

“I must go,” said Louisa, “I promised to comfort and console her daughter.”

“If that be the case,” replied the father, “I will attend you.”

They remained some time with the children; and on their return Mr. Morrice remonstrated with Louisa on depriving them so long of the pleasure of her company. The priest said, “Do not reprove her, for she was pro-

fitably employed, she was, 'Laying up for herself a treasure which neither moth nor rust could corrupt;' the pleasures of this life," he continued, "Mr. Morrice, are transitory ; and you of all men in the world, I think, should know that those which have not virtue for their basis are fleeting indeed."

Mr. Morrice said he was at a loss to understand him, but the confusion evident in his face evinced that he did so. Soon recovering himself, he declared the priest had converted Miss Courtney, and that she would no doubt confess to him.

"I should be delighted," he replied, "to hear confessions so pure ; and whenever she condescends to honour me with her confidence I shall be much gratified."

Louisa said she knew no one to whom she could so soon confide. The conversation then became general, and

Father O'Gahagan amazed them all by his engaging manners and good sense. When he took leave, Mr. Morrice seemed much relieved, and renewed his attention to Louisa, which had evidently been withheld whilst he was there.

"How little did I think," he said, "when I personated father-confessor at the masquerade, you could have been so much pleased with a person in that character! Had I known it, I should still more have congratulated myself on my choice. I sued for confession and you withheld it; but now to a stranger you would willingly give your confidence." He said this in a tone of reproach that surprised Louisa, for even had he been her lover, could he have been jealous of Father O'Gahagan, a priest, and a man of sixty?

"Why," said Louisa, with one of those sweet smiles which Mr. Morrice

found so irresistible, “you make a serious affair of my approbation of the good priest; I should admire merit if I met it in an infidel; and to be pleased with one who, although he does not exactly hold the same faith, yet follows the same divine precepts of Christianity, is surely not astonishing.”

Mr. Morrice, who did not think so deeply on religion, could not cope with her on that subject, but contented himself with saying, he was not so much taken with Father O’Gahagan as the rest of the party: he thought he had a good deal of the Jesuit in his composition.

Louisa defended the good man, as did the rest. Full of the conversation in which she had felt so much interested over-night, she awoke in the morning, and the day not being favourable to walking, sat down and wrote

the following lines, which the conversation had given rise to :—

“ If I should now confess to you,
 Say, can you teach me to pursue
 The path in which I ought to move,
 And all my secret faults reprove ?
 Ah ! will you then indeed reform
 And guard my bosom from the storm
 Of warring passions, empty pleasure ;
 And to my mind bring endless treasure ?
 Now, if all this you can profess,
 Then I with candour will confess.”

Miss Maude came in just as she was finishing them, and moving up to the writing desk, “ I see,” she said, “ you are not writing a letter, and I am sure it must be a sermon ;” then looking over the papers, “ What have we here ? Verses I declare ; well, pray let me read the efforts of your muse.” So saying, she took up the paper, and having read the lines : “ Very well, my dear ; is this an address to your pretended confessor, or the real one ?”

Louisa declared they were not intended for either; but Miss Maude would not be convinced, and running off with them, reached the breakfast-room, just as the family were assembled, before Louisa could overtake her, and putting the paper in the hands of Mr. Morrice, "Here, sir, are lines which I am sure were intended for you."

Louisa, on hearing the concluding words, was overwhelmed with confusion; she declared that the conversation the night before had suggested the idea; for she could not help thinking how inefficacious confession was, unless the true road to amendment could be pointed out.

"That," said Mr. Morrice, "would be unnecessary to Miss Courtney; for who could point out amendment where there is no fault? Rather would it be for her to reform the faults of others; but then, indeed, she could not 'Guard

the bosom from the storm,' which her charms must create." The last part of the speech was said in a low tone of voice, not heard by all the party.

Louisa blushed and felt vexed that Miss Maude had shown the lines: whilst they were commenting on them Father O'Gahagan came in, as Lady Almeria had desired he would call to receive directions respecting the funeral of the poor woman; Louisa was distressed, fearing he might see the lines, and think she had been making a joke of his religion, and trying to recover them caused a little bustle, which brought on an explanation, and the priest good-humouredly begged he might be favoured with a sight of them, and after reading he smiling said, "I will profess what you require, my dear madam, if you will put yourself under my direction." Louisa, delighted to find he was so easy on the

subject, replied, she would most willingly do that.

The priest then conversed with Lady Almeria, on the arrangement necessary to be made for the funeral, and Miss Maude entered into a lively conversation with Lord Rossmore on the impropriety of having asked her lover, Mr. Crawford, to dinner, the day before.

His lordship declared he could not avoid it, as he knew it would make him the happiest creature in the world, being again in company with her. "But are you not wrong, my Lord," said Louisa, "in giving him so dangerous an indulgence, which he has not the power to withstand, but, like a moth, hovers round his own destruction?" "Where," asked Mr. Morrice, "Will you find a man of sufficient resolution to fly from the presence of the woman he loves?"

Mr. Courtney thought nothing so easy; it had always been his opinion that the tender passion was suffered to domineer a great deal too much, and that any one might get the better of it; but Mr. Courtney had never been in love, he spoke as an old bachelor, and as such was reprobated by the ladies.

Lady Almeria declared she thought every man, once in his life, should feel love in all its force; she maintained it refined more than any thing else, and that no man was a tolerable companion until he had been violently in love.

“If that be the case,” observed Lord Rossmore, “Mr. Crawford must be charming; poor fellow, he is most terribly in for it!”

“You mistake me,” replied Lady Almeria, “I do not mean it is alone sufficient to make a man pleasant, but

it softens and gives a lustre to his other good qualities." "As to Mr. Crawford's love," said Miss Maude, "it is so much out of character, it quite disgusts me."

The priest, who had never before heard so much on the subject perhaps in his life, good humouredly addressed Louisa, saying he should soon know the secrets of her heart, as he meant to call on her for the promised confession; and he should certainly bring her to a strict account. She soon after left the room, and the priest took this opportunity of saying to Mr. Courtney he had every reason to be proud of his niece, who appeared a bright pattern of active goodness.

Mr. Courtney would not dissent, but his heart felt no throbbings of tender emotions; he was proud of her, but it was that pride which arose from the hope her perfections would

place her in an elevated situation: sentiment had nothing to do in the feelings. He, however, condescended when the priest left them, to speak in his favour; he observed he was pleased with his unassuming, yet sensible manner, and he should not have supposed an Irish priest could have possessed so much urbanity.

The English country gentleman, even with many virtues, is too apt to think all perfection limited to his own sphere; a mixture with the world, however, convinces him to the contrary; and proves to him the heart of an untutored Indian, may glow with feelings the Christian may be proud of! The God of nature showers his blessings on all his creatures, and gives intellect, where education and civilization are wanting.

Miss Maule declared he was a charming old man, and she was sure,

were she much with him, he would convert her, and perhaps make a nun of her. Louisa entered just as he left them, and regretted she had not seen the good priest before he went, but hoped they should see him again.

Lord Rossmore said, there was no doubt of that, as one of the servants was that day taken ill, and he would frequently attend; confession being so necessary to the professors of their religion.

“ I declare,” replied Miss Maude, “ I should like to confess to the dear man, I wonder if he would give me absolution?” Louisa, who never joked on the subject of religion, looked seriously at Miss Maude, who was soon checked by her more sedate friend, saying she really meant no harm; but she often wished confession was a part of our faith, for her mind would feel more at ease after.

Louisa observed, confession was open for her to him, who alone could pardon. Miss Maude thought her friend rather too serious; Louisa was, indeed, that day, particularly so; the scene she had so lately witnessed, of the death of the poor woman, added to the indisposition of her aunt, who was too unwell to leave her room that morning, all conspired to lower her spirits. Mrs. Connolly never complained, and Louisa was certain she must be ill indeed, not to join the party, and devoted the remainder of the day to her. In the evening, Mrs. Connolly seemed inclined to sleep, and Louisa softly left the room, and was going to Lady Almeria, when, in crossing a long passage, she was accosted in a low voice by a person who requested to speak to her: "I am delighted," he continued, "I have met you, as I wish to converse on

a subject that is of consequence to your future happiness and welfare."

Louisa was astonished and would have been alarmed had she not recognized the speaker to be the good priest.—“Most willingly,” she said “will I attend to you, but how came you here? Does Lady Almeria know it?”

“I do not think she does,” he replied, “for, I have been with one of the servants who is very ill, and I went immediately to the sick person’s room.”

By this time they had reached the door of the Library, “Let us go in here” said the venerable man “I do not think we shall be interrupted,” when shutting the door, he said, “I am now going to examine you, I must bring you to confession—Do you love Mr. Morrice?”

Louisa started, the natural delicacy

of her nature shrunk from the interrogatory, and she remained speechless.

“ I do not ” he said “ ask you this question from idle curiosity but from a regard to your future peace of mind —Do you love him?”

There was something in his manner which seemed to call for an answer, though certainly he had no right to be peremptory.

She replied, “ I am not in love with Mr. Morrice, but I like him ;” “ Oh sad !” said the father whose mind not accustomed to investigate the tender passion, knew not the different gradations, and when Louisa owned she liked him, he trembling thought it was love.

“ Unhappy girl !” he said “ you must not love him, for, his love is the property of another !”

Louisa shuddered, not that it was

of consequence to her, but still, she felt a sensation she could not account for, "Not love him !" she repeated.

"No !" said Father O'Gahagan "he has plighted his faith to another !"

"He is married then !" asked Louisa, her beautiful eyes fixed on the countenance of the Priest—"No" replied the father, "not but in the eyes of God ; his vows are registered in Heaven, though no human being has confirmed the ceremony ; but you shall hear more. In the mean time I rely on your prudence, and must enjoin the strictest secrecy : I have been bound to impart what I have to say, only to you, and you must promise not to divulge it." Louisa did so, and the priest somewhat embarrassed, proceeded to relate the particulars he had to communicate.

"To the family of Rossmore I owe

many obligations. Lord Rossmore has given me many comforts ; the house I live in is on his estate ; and, his liberality has rendered it to me a little Palace. But the pleasure I derive from his society surpasses all other favours, and I would not wound his feelings, or disturb the peace of his family for millions : but I cannot see a being good and pure like Miss Courtney, likely to strike her happiness on a rock that would shipwreck it, without endeavouring to save her ; indeed, not only my inclination, but my duty leads me to do so.—

“ The poor woman, who so much interested you, and on whom you conferred so many favours, imparted to me the story I am about to relate, and to which I must beg your attention.”

Louisa breathless with agitation, bowed her assent, and the Priest began.—

“ Mr. Morrice a few years since went to Scotland for the purpose of grouse-shooting; he put up at a miserable inn, in the Highlands, and a principal man of the place, a Mr. M^cLeod noticed him, and with native hospitality, insisted on his making his house a home whilst he remained there.

Mr. M^cLeod was a widower with two lovely daughters; he had one son in India whom he had sent out with a brother of his wife's, and he was doing very well there. The eldest daughter, Margaret, was soft, innocent, and unsuspicious, the graceful and manly figure of Mr. Morrice soon gained her affections; he discovered his ascendancy, and bent her to his own purposes. Margaret thought all was wisdom and justice which flowed from his lips;—her affection for him was unbounded;—‘twas love almost to madness! She felt she could have followed him even

to beggary ! Margaret had lost the directing hand of a mother when very young, and her exuberant fancy had no rein, for Mr. M^cLeod was too blindly indulgent to see a fault in his daughters. Mr. Morrice spoke to her of love, but it was unfettered love ; 'twas of that sort which suited her glowing imagination, yet she was alive to the principles of virtuous sentiment ; and she often argued with Mr. Morrice that happiness would not be less perfect for submitting to the customs of the world ; but as soon as Margaret M^cLeod began to argue, she was lost ; a woman who argues a point with a man who knows her heart is all his own, cannot fail of being conquered. Her ideas and opinions were soon overthrown, and Margaret M^cLeod left the house of her father with the object most dear to her ; leaving a note behind, saying she was united to Mr.

Morrice. She was united, but she did not explain that it was only in the eye of God who witnessed his vows and promises, never to forsake her! It was by the tie of affection alone which existed so strongly in the heart of Margaret, that she thought it never could be weakened in the breast of Mr. Morrice! He reconciled her by saying, that whilst they remained in Scotland, she could bear his name, which was sufficient with the Scotch to establish a marriage.

“ This made her happy, and in a beautiful retreat near Edinburgh they evaded the pursuit of Mr. M^cLeod, and spent some little time; but when she visited England the delusion vanished, for then she found she must appear in a suspicious character, and the feelings, the pride of Margaret M^cLeod sunk under the humiliating circumstance. Fretfulness followed upbraid-

ings, and the event was, Mr. Morrice's total desertion of her."

Louisa petrified with astonishment scarcely breathed whilst the priest was reciting the dismal tale.

"Is it possible," she exclaimed, "can Mr. Morrice be such a villain?"

"Most certainly" he continued, "for I heard it at a time when all falsehood is discarded, the soul hovering on eternity is incapable of it."

"But how," said Louisa, "could the poor woman come into possession of these circumstances?"

"The poor deluded Margaret," replied the priest, "lodged at her mother's house with Mr. Morrice, who past by a fictitious name; it was there he left her, and in the fulness of her heart, and affliction of the moment, she ingenuously told her sad story to the daughter, who was about her own

age, and participated in her feelings.

“ Soon after she married, and left her mother's house with Sullivan; owing to this she had never heard of Margaret McLeod since; but when she saw Mr. Morrice with you, she was convinced he was the person who had basely deserted the lady she had so much compassionated, but gratitude kept her silent on the subject, nor would she ever have revealed her knowledge of the transaction, had she not heard he was going to be married to you, as it is confidently reported you are to be his wife; and conjecturing from your manner, how wretched you would be, if you heard this story after marriage, I wished to save you so serious a pang, relying on your secrecy. My gratitude, as well as the departed woman's, forbids my ever being the means of holding any part of this family up to censure: I

wish I could allow you to tell your aunt, but my commission did not extend so far; it was only intended as a guide and a check to you."

"I shall," said Louisa, "attend to what you require; nor shall the family of Rossmore ever be made unhappy on my account."

"Ah! would," replied Father O'Gahagan, "that you were by circumstances as by inclination permitted to make it happy! How sweetly would your mild virtues adorn this noble mansion! How kindly would you cherish and relieve all around it!"

"I thank you, my good sir, it is not so ordained." Louisa said this in a melancholy tone of voice.

"I hope," answered the priest, "I have not probed your wounds too deeply; if any lingering love exists for Mr. Morrice, prove to me that you have the strength of mind I gave you

credit for; let me not be deceived in a character I had thought so perfect; I leave now every thing to your excellent head and heart."

He then withdrew, and she returned to her aunt, for she was not in a state of mind to join the party below. She did not know how to conduct herself in regard to Mr. Morrice; she was certain a degree of restraint would appear in her manner unusual to her; she had felt more interested for him than any other man, it was painful to think him a villain, and she wished she could have doubted.

Miss Maude came to her, and gave a turn to the seriousness of her ideas, by showing her a most absurd love-letter she had received from Mr. Crawford, renewing his offer, and calling her the bright star of his affections. Indeed the letter was so full of folly that it was impossible not to laugh at

it. Miss Maude was happy he had written, as it gave her an opportunity of absolutely refusing him ; which she lost no time in doing. Miss Maude's rattle about her lover amused them during supper, which prevented Louisa's embarrassment from appearing.

Lady Almeria told Louisa, on retiring, that it was necessary the poor woman should be buried the next morning.

Miss Maude, on hearing the funeral must pass the front of the castle, entreated Louisa would walk out whilst the corpse was moving, declaring that such a sight would absolutely unhinge her nerves for a length of time.

Louisa would not herself have flown from the melancholy scene, but she could not refuse her friend ; and they agreed to walk quite through a beautiful plantation, which skirted the domain. Louisa was glad Miss Maude

had summoned resolution to walk, as it was not a favourite amusement of hers; she was, however, much delighted with her ramble; the fresh air gave her spirits, and Louisa led her on imperceptibly.

When they had walked some distance they heard a low murmur, which arrested their pace and attention; it seemed as if it was loud, but that distance softened it to their ears. "What can it be?" said Miss Maude, "Surely," replied Louisa, "it is not the cry of distress for assistance, and we are not near enough to render any."

"No!" answered her friend, "the voices were in numbers, and sounded too pleasing for that, therefore your good little humane heart may be at rest."

CHAP. XI.

JUST as they were speaking, some pointers brushed by them, and immediately after Mr. Morrice and the game-keeper appeared.

"Ah!" said he, "I am in luck, I did not expect to start such game this morning."

Miss Maude screamed on seeing his gun. "For heaven's sake," she exclaimed, "take care, you will shoot us! As I live, there are two barrels, you may shoot us both!"

"No, no," said he, laughing, "I do not wish to kill, only to wound in the present instance; but not to distress you, I will give up the terrific gun;" so saying he gracefully dismounted, and giving it to the game-

keeper, desired him to take it home, as he should return with the ladies.

“ Pray do not let us be the means,” said Louisa, “ of depriving you of a morning’s amusement.”—“ If you deprive me of what the world calls amusement you give me solid happiness in return, that of walking and conversing with you.”

“ Well,” answered Miss Maude, “ now you have parted with that horrid gun, I am glad we have met you, for Miss Courtney has led me on till I am tired to death, and I really believe we should have lost ourselves; pray, sir, where are we?”

“ You are about three miles from the castle,” replied Mr. Morrice: this they had no conception of, the extent of the plantation having so much deceived them.

Miss Maude declared she should never be able to return, she was so

much tired. "Come," said Louisa, "if that be the case, let us sit down if you will not find it too cold;" and they all seated themselves on a stump of a tree which lay very conveniently in the road.

From different ideas a pause ensued, and the same noise broke on them as before. "There!" said Louisa, "there, again! What can it be?"

"It proceeds, I suppose," replied Mr. Morrice, "from the funeral of your poor widow; the last tribute of grief the friends think they can show the departed person, is their favourite howl, which my brother has endeavoured to suppress, for the custom is certainly a savage one: but it is," he continued, "not easy to break through established forms; time alone can entirely eradicate prejudices which are strong in the minds of the vulgar; and were you to live amongst us, Mis Courtney, you would find they must

be led not driven. It is the want of this knowledge of character that makes so much rebellion amongst the lower orders ; if treated with more consideration by their superiors, they would wipe the dust from their feet : flatter their vanity and you master them."

The noise seemed to come nearer. " Poor creature," said Louisa, starting from her seat, " we shall at last see the funeral." " They will not pass very near," answered Mr. Morrice, " they will cross the road at some distance."

Miss Maude begged to move out of sight, for she should be so shockingly dismal after, it would be quite dreadful, and she hurried the contrary way.

Louisa turned back, and saw at a distance the solemn procession ; a great many of Lord Rossmore's servants attended : " Ah, poor woman !" she exclaimed, and a tear dropped to the memory of her, whose patient sufferings

she had witnessed ; the idea too, that her last thoughts were for her happiness, and that the communication with the priest had been to that effect, softened her, and Margaret M'Leod pressed forcibly on her mind. She endeavoured to divert her ideas ; and the lively conversation of her loquacious friend very much assisted her exertions.

Mr. Morrice proposed taking them a nearer way back, as he feared they would be tired : and they came in view of a small but pretty river, which passes the town of Kells. Louisa remarked that Ireland had much the advantage of England in its rivers and fine lakes, which beautified every prospect.

“ Scotland,” observed Mr. Morrice, “ is still more favoured ; the scenery there is most picturesque and romantic. On entering the town of Perth, as I

went to the Highlands, I was perfectly charmed; the beautiful river Tay meandering through a rich valley, far exceeded my expectation of any thing I had any idea of seeing in that northern region."

Louisa felt too much on this subject to speak; she had never heard him mention, before, his having been there; and it was a strange coincidence he should now speak of it just after the priest had told her the story.

Miss Maude, who had neither motive nor inclination to be silent, said, "Pray, Mr. Morrice, tell me, are the Scotch women pretty? Now do tell me all about them."

"The women," he replied, and Louisa fancied his tongue faltered, "are, generally speaking, handsome; but their beauty is not so lasting as that of the English, and" (bowing to Miss Maude) "I may say Irish fair ones."

Louisa said, "I am so prepossessed in their favour by the different poets who have celebrated them, that I should expect to find them all lovely and interesting."

"You must always allow," replied Mr. Morrice, "for a poet's licence, and consider they are as partial in their descriptions as a lover's fancy; and who would take that as a criterion?"

"Their accent," observed Miss Maude, "I should think would inspire love; it is so sweet, so soothing."

"It is," replied Mr. Morrice, "particularly in the Highlands;" he paused for a moment—memory, busy memory, will bring back to the mind days departed never to return; and when conscience feels a sting, the recollection is most painful. Louisa would not for the world interrupt the reverie which, it was plain, these remarks had given rise to; they were sacred to the me-

mory of Margaret M'Leod, and she wished she had been at liberty to plead for her, for her he had so cruelly deserted.

Miss Maude proceeded in her interrogations, by desiring to know what the men were in general like?

“ They are sensible, and well-informed,” answered Mr. Morrice; “ you never meet with a Scotchman who has not had a good education ; it is generally attended by sound sense, and a keen observance of human nature ; which accounts for their influence in general when they get out in the world. A Scotchman, on his first launching into life, has no opinion of his own ; he knows he has his fortune to make, and that an accomodating compliance with the wishes of others is a sure way of securing success ; and so persevering are they that they never deviate from their general cold and even tenor.”

"I think," said Louisa, "you do not draw a very favourable character of the men."

"I beg your pardon," replied Mr. Morrice, "you mistake me if you think I meant to do otherwise; much depends on education and early habits. The usual mode of bringing up boys in Scotland insensibly leads them to this sort of submission; in fact, it is a second nature. They have one great virtue, that of strong attachment to their own families; no sooner does a Scotchman make money abroad than he thinks of those at home who want his assistance; and his prudent habits give him the power to serve them."

"But for all that," said Miss Maude, "I would not marry a Scotchman; I do not approve of that constant compliance; I wish sometimes to be contradicted; and if a man did not do so, I should either fear he thought me a fool, or was one himself."

Mr. Morrice, laughing, assured her she need not be alarmed, for he was convinced when *she* married, her husband would frequently have occasion to differ in opinion; indeed, he believed there was little reason to complain of too much compliance on either side, for matrimony was too often a state of warfare.

The ladies could not agree with him on this point, and arguing on the subject, they walked imperceptibly on, till they came in sight of the house. "Is it possible! Are we so near Lord Rossmore's? I had no idea we had walked so far," said Louisa, "you have really, Mr. Morrice, brought us a very short way back."—"No, no, my dear," replied Miss Maude, "he has only beguiled our time by his very agreeable conversation—come! you may as well own you think so, for I am sure you do, by that sly look of yours."

Louisa felt it was really as her friend said, but did not like to own it. Mr. Morrice paused, hoping to hear her confirm the compliment of Miss Maude, but the soft blue eyes of Louisa were cast on the ground, and the downcast timid expression of them might be construed into more flattering applause than that so lavished by Miss Maude.

Mr. Morrice took her hand—"You are tired, I fear, Miss Courtney; come, for this short distance, do not deny me the pleasure of assisting you." Without waiting for an answer, he drew her arm gently under his, and almost forcibly kept it there.

Miss Maude loitered behind to gather some berries, which she thought would ornament her head very prettily at dinner. Louisa was distressed when she found herself walking alone with Mr. Morrice, the person she had promised the good priest to avoid; she

stopped, looked back, and wished to wait for her friend.

“I see her,” said Mr. Morrice, “she is in that thicket gathering berries; but you are cold, let us walk on.”

“Oh! no!” replied Louisa, “let us wait.”

Mr. Morrice dropped the arm he had been holding, saying, “What have I done to offend Miss Courtney? Why this coolness? There was a time when voluntarily you would have put yourself under my care; how have I deserved this distance? Tell me, that I may atone, if I have offended.

Louisa knew that she could not account for the alteration of her conduct, for Mr. Morrice's manner had been uniformly respectful; she blushed at being thought inconsistent, and assured him, she was fully sensible

of his polite attention to her on all occasions.

“ Polite attention! oh! how cold is that expression; yet I must, and ought to be contented with it; oh! why?”—beating his forehead from the excess of his agitation: “but come, madam, shall we return to meet Miss Maude?”

“ By no means,” said Louisa, seeing his extreme perturbation; not wishing to be thought prudish or severe, and struck by his manner in which hurt feeling and pride tried to get the mastery: she said, “Let us go on, Miss Maude will soon overtake us;” so saying, with one of her sweet smiles, she took his arm.

“ Dangerous Syren,” he muttered; “you lead me on as you will.” When they reached the castle, Mr. Courtney was standing at the window of the

library, and he was highly gratified at seeing his niece leaning on the arm of Mr. Morrice, *tetè-a-tetè*; and calling Lord Rossmore—"That looks well my lord." They were mutually pleased; for soon after Mr. Courtney came to the castle, Lord Rossmore had expressed his great admiration of Louisa, and said, how happy he should be, to see his brother united to her. The pride of Mr. Courtney was much flattered by this, and he assured the earl he was highly sensible of the honour he conferred on them, by wishing for an alliance; at the same time, giving him fully to understand, the respectability and consequence of the Courtney family; he promised his interest in the cause.

Lord Rossmore said, "he had never seen his brother pay so much attention to any one before, and only hoped he might have serious inten-

tions; for, continued his lordship, to see my brother married to an amiable woman, that my estates may go in the right line of inheritance, would render me as happy as I have a right to be, on this side of the grave. My own prospects in matrimony have been blighted, by the falsehood of one I trusted, and I shall never again embark on that shore, where I am sure there are many quicksands; I hope my brother, however, will have resolution to trust his happiness to her, who seems so well able to cherish and increase it; he has seen so much of the world, that a woman who has had the same experience, would not suit him. He wishes for genuine nature, with a degree of refinement; and I do not know any one who comes up to that description, so much as your lovely niece.

Mr. Courtney was flattered by the

compliment, though his conscience somewhat smote him, that he had not in the least contributed to those acquirements, which gained universal admiration; but, by chilling severity and unkindness, had endeavoured to cramp in the parent's exertions of intellect, which had nurtured and brought to maturity so amiable a being; for what checks the exertion of genius so much as poverty? What so much renders our abilities inactive and useless as neglect? These Captain Courtney had experienced from his brother and family; yet, manly exertions, and good animal spirits, had braved them all. He protected the woman he had chosen from the world's "chilling scorn;" and educated his daughter, so as to be an ornament to the family to which she belonged; the elder branch of that family now looking to her as an aggrandizement,

though he had before assisted in spurning her parents and herself from it. He now looked forward to the pleasing hope that her beauty and accomplishments would make him uncle to an earl.

We are all sanguine when vanity wings her airy plumes over our senses ; and although Mr. Courtney was nearly as old as Lord Rossmore, he did not despair to live to see that happy day. Vanity and pride, how subservient are thy votaries ! At thy shrine no unwilling victims sacrifice ; but obsequious to thy wishes, carry their willing offerings to thine altar ; whilst that of virtue too often goes undorned, but not by Louisa Courtney !

The walking home with Mr. Morrice had been a painful task to her ; she felt that in admitting his attention she acted wrong, yet could not at once assume a reserve to a person

she had been so intimate with, though her manner could not fail of being embarrassed, for the rich endowments of sensibility, and true feeling, were all her own. By the time they reached the great hall of the castle, Lord Rossmore and Mr. Courtney were both there to meet them. Louisa, with her usual ingenuousness, said, they had been fortunate in meeting Mr. Morrice, or they might have been lost.

“ You speak in the plural,” replied Mr. Courtney, “ had you any other companion ?” “ Oh ! yes ; Miss Maude.”

Mr. Courtney did not seem so well pleased at this information, as he hoped, by agreement, they had gone alone. At that moment Miss Maude made her appearance, looking like a wood nymph ; her black chip hat was ornamented with red berries, and

wreaths of holly entwined in her dark brown hair, gave a more brilliant cast to a countenance which nature had made all animation: with an arch smile she hoped Louisa had enjoyed an agreeable *tetè-a-tetè*; "It was one," replied Louisa, "you imposed on us." "For ever blessed then," answered Mr. Morrice, "be the event; but call it not imposition, 'twas mercy, 'twas kindness to its full extent."

Louisa thought of poor Margaret M^c Leod, and felt that the compliment ought not to please; she hastened up stairs to tell her aunt all that had passed, for she never kept any thing from that dear relative; the only one was that imparted to her by the priest, and she almost repented she had promised to keep the secret, for concealment was painful to her.

At dinner, Mrs. Connolly mentioned her intention of soon returning to

Dublin; she found her indisposition increase, and she wished to consult her physician. This intimation threw a gloom over the party; Lord Rossmore said, no other plea, but the necessity of Mrs. Connolly attending to her health, should prevail on him to part from them.

“Never,” answered Lady Almeria, “has this castle appeared so pleasant to me, as since you have all been here.”

Mr. Courtney looked pleased by this speech; vanity generally appreciates all that is pleasant to itself; and Mr. Courtney determined on redoubling his attention to her whilst he remained, not doubting but he had largely contributed to the pleasurable sensations, which she had just so candidly acknowledged.

“As we are to lose our charming associates soon,” said Lord Rossmore, “we must, Almeria, ask those of our

neighbours who know, and are so much pleased with them; and pray do not forget good father O'Gahagan, for I think Miss Courtney is more interested about him, than any one she has seen."

Ah! thought Louisa; little does he know how much cause I have to think of, and feel an interest in the good priest. She said, she was obliged to Lord Rossmore for the attention, as she should indeed be most happy to see him.

Mr. Courtney was in high spirits the remainder of the day, and was every thing that was gallant to Lady Almeria, so much so, that Lord Rossmore could not help remarking it, and secretly wished he might think seriously of her.

Two days after was fixed on for a large party to dine at the castle, and the priest was not forgotten.

Louisa was much annoyed by the increasing attentions of Mr. Morrice, and determined on trying her influence with father O'Gahagan, to allow her to tell the story of Margaret M^cLeod to her aunt, as she would then, she was convinced, assist her in avoiding him entirely. For this purpose she was all anxiety to see him, and as she knew he would come early, went to the drawing-room some time before the rest of the party assembled. She took up a book that was lying on the table; it opened at a part that particularly struck her: "The arrows of affliction, barbed with anguish, are often fixed deep in our choicest comforts;" she read this aloud, and exclaimed, how true! She started at hearing a voice over her shoulder.

"I hope, my amiable young lady, you will never have cause to own the truth of this remark."

She turned round, and saw good father O'Gahagan: "Ah!" said she, "I am delighted to see you, and thank you for your friendly wish, but I am fearful I already feel the force of it; for has not your account of Mr. Morrice, placed in my mind an unpleasant sensation, not to be removed, unless I could have your leave to impart the sad story to my aunt"—"And I do not," replied the priest, "know how to give you that; the poor creature, who told me, had a good heart, and the strong tie of gratitude influenced her conduct; this I must respect; and she would not have disclosed the story, had it not been to save you from impending destruction; but should Mr. Morrice ever have the audacity to offer you his hand, ask him if he ever lodged at a Mrs. Wilton's, in Bristol: you will then be able to judge by his manner,

for it must betray him, and confirm what I have informed you; should that not be the case, tell him you have heard of his baseness, and, should it be necessary, he may call on me for further explanation, for I will stand the test of his inquiries. Happy indeed, should I be, if any interference of mine, can save you from misery; for seldom have I seen a being who has interested me so much, as yourself. Preserve your ingenuousness of manner; let not the world laugh you out of your angelic goodness, for the generality of mankind are too apt to condemn, what they are unable to imitate. “I have brought you,” he continued, “the purse which you left at the cabin, the morning I first saw you; the poor woman desired I would return it: as she approached her end, she was more indifferent to the goods of this life: ‘I will leave my child to Providence,’ she said, who never

forsakes the helpless orphan. Miss Courtney has already served us materially; I cannot take from her so large a sum, and it would look as if I doubted the goodness of Lady Almeria; my mind disturbed, and not quite itself, felt a dread which it has now got the better of; and my girl must take her chance with her brothers.' "This poor creature," said Louisa, "had certainly a mind superior to her station." "She had," answered the Father; "but we must consider she was born to a better fate; an imprudent marriage had reduced her."

"I will not," replied Louisa, "take the money, but leave it in your hands to dispose of, as you think best, for the use of the girl."

"Good, excellent Miss Courtney," said the Father; "why are you not always to be an inmate at Rossmore castle? Happy then should I close

my eyes ; for then I should be certain the poor would never want a friend ! I will accept this sacred deposit ; and if you will condescend hereafter to let me know your destiny, I will inform you how it is applied,”

“ Be assured,” answered Louisa, “ I shall have great pleasure in remembering Father O’Gahagan ; and, wherever I go, or whatever may be my fate, I shall think with gratitude, esteem, and affection of you ; and, when the narrow-minded, of my religion, cast a slur on those of your profession, I will, in my heart, canonize your virtues !”

The company coming into the drawing-room, interrupted this conversation, so interesting to both Louisa and the priest. Mr. Morrice’s attention to her, during dinner, was that of the tenderest lover ; for the retiring behaviour of Louisa, increased his admiration, instead of repelling it.

How much do those females mistake, when, by a bold presuming manner, they think to claim and subdue all beholders. The gentle answer, and unassuming remark, takes the heart captive!

The priest attentively observed them both; he thought Louisa loved Mr. Morrice, but was endeavouring to make a sacrifice of that love to principle; he felt for, and venerated a character so exalted; her gentleness of manner had, from the first, secured her his good opinion, and the many proofs he had had of her perfections, confirmed it. In exterior, Mr. Morrice appeared calculated to make her happy; and the priest left the house, regretting he had been a villain.

Every one remarked Mr. Courtney's attention to Lady Almeria, but he found he had not resolution to make known his sentiments to her; indeed, he thought it would altogether be

better to consider more on the subject, as he could, at any time, make her an offer by letter. He hoped to see them in England, as Lord Rossmore had partly promised to visit him.

Mr. Courtney declared, that great as his happiness would be on the occasion, it would be incomplete unless Lady Almeria accompanied him; and, he trusted, Mrs. Connolly would meet her at his house. This she did not object to; and every thing was arranged, apparently, to the satisfaction of all parties.

Mr. Morrice determined on returning to Dublin with them; Lady Almeria sadly regretted their departure, and it was a melancholy parting on all sides; Mrs. Connolly and her friends, had spent their time most pleasantly within the hospitable walls of the castle. To Louisa, latterly, the pleasure had been somewhat embittered, for it is hard to learn that the

being you have once thought perfect should be far otherwise; she did not feel that delight, on approaching the metropolis, which is generally excited in young minds, when a scene of gaiety is in view; nor, indeed, did Miss Maude express her accustomed rapture, for the recollection of Mr. Spencer recurred to her as she approached her home; and the knowledge that he was far away, took from her, for the moment, all wish of mixing in society.

At Rossmore Castle she had indulged in thinking of him; solitude is the nurse of love; and, in her different rambles, the idea of Mr. Spencer had always predominated; although, she declared to Louisa, she tried to forget him.

END OF VOL. II.



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